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**THE PROCEEDINGS**

**of**

**The South Carolina  
Historical Association**

**2011**

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Robert Figueira and Stephen Lowe

Editors

The South Carolina Historical Association  
South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
Columbia, South Carolina  
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The editors are especially indebted to those colleagues who reviewed papers for publication. Their comments and suggestions have greatly improved the quality of the papers presented here. Reviewers for the 2011 volume were:

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## A Notice to Contributors Concerning Style

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The editorial committee invites submission of manuscripts from authors of papers presented at the annual meeting. On the recommendation of reviewers and editors, manuscripts may be published in *The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*.

In general, manuscripts should not exceed 4500 words (about eighteen double-spaced pages) including endnotes. As soon as possible after the annual meeting, authors should submit two paper copies and one electronic copy to the editors for review. The electronic copy should be submitted as an e-mail attachment in Word for Windows or WordPerfect for Windows format. E-mail addresses for the editors follow this note. The electronic text should be flush left and double-spaced, with as little special formatting as possible. Do not paginate the electronic version of the paper. All copies should use 12-point type in the Times New Roman font. Place your name and affiliation, along with both electronic and postal contact information, on a separate page. The title of the paper should be at the top of the first page of the text, in bold type. Please use margins of one inch throughout your paper and space only once between sentences. Indent five spaces without quotation marks all quotations five or more lines in length.

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Editors:

Robert Figueira, Lander University, [figueira@lander.edu](mailto:figueira@lander.edu)

Stephen Lowe, University of South Carolina Union, [lowesh@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:lowesh@mailbox.sc.edu)

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## **“You Say Yemassee, I Say Yamasee”: Recasting the Early History of South Carolina**

William L. Ramsey

I thought I was being clever when I came up with the title for this presentation, “You Say Yemassee, I Say Yamasee.” But several people, mostly younger folks, some of them my own students at Lander University, have asked me what I meant by it.

Well, I was hoping for a catchy, hip, cultural reference, but I suppose, in retrospect, this one is a little dated. It doesn’t become any clearer for younger listeners, I now realize, when I explain that Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers sang a song back in 1937 about pronouncing the words tomato and potato in different ways while roller skating in the movie *Shall We Dance*. When I continue to explain, usually after an awkward silence, that the two different spellings of Yamasee are, surprisingly enough, pronounced the same way, whereas the same spellings of tomato and potato once lead Rogers and Astaire to the brink of romantic rupture, it doesn’t help much.

So I’ve pretty much had it with my own speech title. As a matter of fact, after much reflection on the matter, I’m ready to call the whole thing off.

I thought it up in the first place only because the most frequently asked question about my book on the Yamasee War, cleverly entitled *The Yamasee War*, is why do I spell the word Yamasee as I do. Why not the traditional spelling, Yemassee, as it appears on the Rand McNally map of South Carolina, as it appears in most traditional histories of the event, as it appears, for heaven’s sake, in William Gilmore Simms’ nineteenth-century work of fiction about the Yamasee, cleverly entitled *The Yemassee*?

It was a question I had not anticipated at my first readings, and my initial, clumsy efforts to answer it tended to focus on two basic points, which still hold true as far as they go. First, the Yamasees themselves were non-literate Muskogee/Timuccua language speakers. So they would not have recognized a specific, Anglicized spelling of their name as being more or less correct. Second, the preponderance of the English and Spanish language documents I consulted from the early 1700s spelled their name as Yamasee. The William Gilmore Simms spelling, on the other hand, appeared nowhere in the colonial documents, absolutely nowhere. As a responsible historian, I told people, I simply used the earliest reliable consensus spelling of the name available in the surviving records.

But there was a bit more to it than I understood at first. And the more I thought about the question, the more I found myself skating a duet of sorts with William Gilmore Simms. It was Simms, after all, who invented the traditional spelling, Yemassee, in

his 1835 novel. I suspect that he was simply trying to make the name appear more exotic, more Indian perhaps, for his white readers by defying English phonetic rules. And while his fictional treatment of the Yamasee War was never intended as a work of historical scholarship, it was, nevertheless, the only other book length treatment of the Yamasees and the Yamasee War available until my book was published a couple of years ago.

With respect to the basic facts of the Yamasee War, I can agree with Simms on several points. Following their attack on British negotiators at Pocotaligo Town in April 1715, Yamasee warriors attacked plantations throughout the South Carolina lowcountry. Joined later by Lower Creek, Apalachee, Savannah, Euchee, Cherokee, and Catawba allies, they reduced the colony to a frightened enclave of refugees huddled in Charleston. At the height of the war effort, nearly every Indian nation in the South, reaching all the way to the Choctaws in modern day Mississippi, had declared war on South Carolina. As one Englishman observed in late 1715, "we are surrounded and under attack on every side but the sea-side." The colony survived the ordeal, Simms and I agree, only by the narrowest of margins.

It is not fair to Simms to point out the ways in which my work of history is more accurate or reliable than his literary fiction, nor is it my point to do so. It is just as wrong to chide him at length for his racism, though it is mighty tempting. Simms was a man of his times, and he believed the war dramatized one of two possible outcomes that might be expected when a "superior" race confronted an "inferior" one. "The superior," he argued, "must necessarily be the ruin of the race which is inferior." The only alternative to annihilation that Simms held out was for the "inferior race" to acknowledge its status and "sink its existence in with that of the other." Not surprisingly, Simms arranged to have the defiant Yamasees exterminated in a gruesome massacre at the end of his novel, while African slaves came to their senses and pledged to serve their white masters faithfully. When offered his freedom in the aftermath of the Yamasee defeat, for instance, the Governor's slave shouts "I dam to hell, massa, if I guine to be free!"

Simms is too easy a target for that sort of thing. Setting him up as a Straw Man accomplishes nothing. Beyond all that, however, beyond even the eccentric spelling of the name Yamasee that he invented out of thin air, I believe there is something profound at work in his nineteenth-century novel. I believe, moreover, that it offers a meaningful counterpoint to the aspirations of scholars in the twenty-first century and provides a good platform for surveying the Yamasee War's strange career in southern historiography.

First and foremost, Simms sought to cast the war as a watershed in the development of southern history, as a defining moment for South Carolina and for the

South generally. And I have sought to do the same. Separating our two versions, of course, lies the vast immovable fulcrum of the Civil War. Where Simms, writing in the 1830s, saw the upward sweep of southern nationalism gathering steam, I see, instead, its smoking wreckage.

During the one hundred seventy-three-year interregnum between the publications of our books, the Yamasee War all but disappeared from popular memory. Simms' understanding of the war lost currency rapidly in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation, and an alternative interpretation was slow to emerge even among professional historians. Not until the publication in 1929 of Verner Crane's classic book on the colonial South, *The Southern Frontier*, did the Yamasee War make another appearance in print. Crane's meticulous research explored the imperial rivalries between France, Spain, and Great Britain, which increasingly influenced the region in the early eighteenth-century. Although his treatment of the Yamasee War was quite brief, consisting of only a single chapter within the book, it was noteworthy for its willingness to take Native Americans seriously as historical actors. He viewed the war as an angry response to unprincipled and abusive Carolinians, who allegedly beat, raped, and enslaved southeastern Indians.

Crane's treatment of the Yamasee War influenced a handful of historians profoundly and became the standard scholarly version for most of the twentieth century. Yet this was a relatively limited circle of light. No book-length efforts to understand the event were ever attempted, and its broader meaning for southerners and Americans generally remained ambiguous. Meanwhile, the two other major "Indian Wars" of the colonial era, Pontiac's Rebellion in the Great Lakes region and King Philip's War in New England, became hotbeds of scholarly debate and came to be regarded as defining events in the creation of national identity.

The reasons for this state of affairs are not hard to identify. Those northern colonial events produced effects that can be traced comfortably through the American Revolution and the Civil War without interruption. They function as part of an emerging master narrative for a triumphant nation, whereas the Yamasee War inhabits a more tragic realm. If the Yamasee War helped to define a region, and I argue that it did, it was a region that went badly awry of the national pattern and ended ultimately in the havoc of the Civil War. Americans, in short, are not yearning to take ownership of this particular knowledge.

Having been raised in a Calvinist household, however, I feel oddly comfortable with the prospect of foreordained failure. For me, investigating the legacy of the Yamasee War promises insight into some of the most tangled lessons of the southern past. The conflict clearly deserves a more prominent place, for instance, in discussions

about the origins of racial ideology and slavery. Prior to the outbreak of the war in 1715, South Carolinians employed a multi-racial slave labor force that included not only African laborers but Native American men, women, and children as well. Arriving in the Carolina lowcountry via a far-flung slave trade that reached all the way to the Mississippi River, Indian slaves may have comprised as much as 26 percent of the slave population on the eve of the Yamasee War. That reality made the conflict more than a simple struggle for survival against external enemies for Carolinians. It forced them to re-evaluate the internal human landscape of their nascent plantation economy and make some ominous decisions about race and slavery that would shape the region, I argue, for years to come. Before the first year of the war ended, they had enacted legislation that served to define racial identity more specifically than ever before, and they soon forged an official link between the status of slavery and African ancestry. In defending themselves against Native Americans, therefore, Carolinians simultaneously defended the enslavement of African Americans.

The defensive measures they employed to control the enslaved population, moreover, involved foundational decisions about the sort of economy that could reliably deprive slaves of their freedom. Having identified the Indian trade as one of the causes of the Yamasee War, Carolinians moved to sublimate cross-cultural commerce with Native Americans to the needs of the plantation regime. This was done in a number of ways. For three years following the restoration of peace in 1717, for example, the colony established a centralized “factory” system that allowed the government to control the Indian trade. Their intent was to eliminate the subversive influence of individual traders, who tended to pursue their own economic self-interest at the expense of Carolina’s diplomatic agenda. The colonial government also sought to position free Native American populations strategically as a means of intimidating African slaves. This was done conspicuously at the Winyaw Indian factory to the northward of Charleston. There Carolinians discovered that fear of the Winyaw Indians tended to keep the slaves “in awe.” The Yamasee War thus marked the birth of a state policy of racial manipulation that Columbia University historian William S. Willis called “divide and rule,” in which white Carolinians sought to maneuver majority Indian and African populations into opposition against each other in order to provide security to the minority European populace.

These may seem like arcane points, but they lie at the heart of my effort to cause trouble for historians of the nineteenth-century South and, perhaps, even the ghost of William Gilmore Simms. If South Carolina sought to regulate trade in order to preserve the colony’s social order as early as 1716, then we are looking at an economy that cannot rightly be called capitalist, no matter how exploitive its labor practices.

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It was, rather, an economy harnessed to the preservation of elite property and racial prerogative.

This observation causes trouble, I think, or should cause it, because most scholarly discussions of the capitalist or non-capitalist nature of the southern economy have tended so far to bracket themselves exclusively between the dates of 1800 and 1865. These authors, whose names I think most of us here could probably write on a napkin before I finish the next sentence, have felt too comfortable in treating the Old South as a timeless microcosm without precedent. The ease with which they speculate about the origins of southern distinctiveness without casting a single backward glance to the eighteenth century, the American Revolution, or the Yamasee War, is simply stunning.

Worse still, some of these authors have mastered a way of discussing the nineteenth-century southern economy without reference to race or racism, as if proslavery treatises were born in a Platonic ether of pure mercantile theory. My ambition is not to overturn the debate but to draw its gaze across a greater stretch of time, to remind the majority party, as it were, of nineteenth-century Old South specialists that there was an older South that gave birth to their epoch, and that race was an issue there as well. It should be a part of their scholarship and part of the public memory of how the South's peculiarity took shape.

Simms was not laboring against this sort of historical preoccupation, but he, too, sought to craft a story that could see clear back to the beginning, a story that could shape popular opinion about regional origins and uniqueness. Here the balance of virtues tends to swing in Simms' favor, I'm afraid, for he was far more widely read and popular in his day than I have any reason to expect I or my work will be in mine.



## **“We Will Strike at the Head and Demolish the Monster”: The Impact of Joel R. Poinsett’s Correspondence on President Andrew Jackson during the Nullification Crisis, 1832–1833**

Joshua Cain

Between October 1832 and March 1833, Joel R. Poinsett and President Andrew Jackson exchanged a flurry of letters over the crisis in their home state of South Carolina, which was threatening to nullify the federal tariffs of 1828 and 1832. Poinsett was Jackson’s most significant advisor in South Carolina, and his correspondence greatly influenced Jackson’s decisions and actions throughout the crisis.

Poinsett’s correspondence influenced Jackson in three important ways: Because both men held similar views on the nature of nullification and the Union, Jackson placed great trust in Poinsett’s reports from South Carolina. They confirmed that conflict was inevitable and informed Jackson’s choices in his attempts to resolve the crisis.

Jackson’s perception that nullification was about ambitious demagogues has been well documented by historians and contemporaries. At the Jefferson Day dinner of 1830, Jackson toasted “Our Union, it must be preserved.” In response, John C. Calhoun, Jackson’s vice president and secret architect of nullification at the time, toasted, “The Union, next to our liberty, the most dear.”<sup>1</sup> Several days later, a South Carolina congressman visited Jackson. The congressman asked Old Hickory if there was anything the chief of state wanted conveyed to the people of South Carolina. The president said no, but just as quickly changed his mind, stating:

Yes I have, please give my compliments to my friends in your state, and say to them, that if a single drop of blood shall be shed there in opposition to the laws of the United States, I will hang the first man I can lay my hand on engaged in such treasonable conduct, upon the first tree I can reach.<sup>2</sup>

Jackson’s comments were shocking in light of his inaction when Georgia refused to enforce the Supreme Court’s decision in *Worcester v. Georgia*. His silence then seemed to indicate to at least one Unionist that: “the old man seems to be more than half a Nullifier himself.”<sup>3</sup> An upcountry South Carolina editor asked, “Is the tariff act more of a Supreme law than a Supreme Court decision?”<sup>4</sup>

In July 1832, Jackson endorsed a bill that would modify the tariff and was favorable to the South. The bill, he told John Coffee, would “nullify the Nullifiers,” and if the idea of nullification endured, the bill would at least prove that nullification was an

effort of disappointed ambition, originating with unprincipled men who would rather rule in hell than be subordinate in heaven.<sup>5</sup> When the modification further enraged the nullifiers, however, Jackson decided that tariff reform would not work.

Poinsett's beliefs concerning nullification and the Union have not been well documented.<sup>6</sup> However, just as Jackson maintained an informal "kitchen cabinet" at the White House, so, too, he maintained an informal network to gather intelligence from around the country, Poinsett was his most important agent in South Carolina. Poinsett was uniquely suited for this endeavor. While acting as the Consul in General of the United States to Chile and Argentina between 1810 and 1815, he overstepped his diplomatic bounds by aiding militarily the revolutionary juntas in their conflicts with the Spanish.<sup>7</sup> As the first United States minister to Mexico, he once again violated the normal bounds of diplomacy by contributing greatly to the organization of York Rite Masonry, a group that eventually became the moniant party within the Mexican government in 1828.<sup>8</sup> Throughout these experiences, Poinsett developed into a skilled organizer and planner, both of which helped him to create a Unionist movement within South Carolina. In these endeavors he reported directly to the president, as the case would be throughout the Nullification Crisis. Moreover, this crisis provided Poinsett with an opportunity to display his military prowess, an attribute that President Jackn would find useful.<sup>9</sup>

In February 1829, Poinsett expressed his opinion on nullification, stating to his cousin Dr. Joseph Johnson: "to advocate a dissolution of the Union or any act of resistance to the execution of the laws of Congress . . . I can never be brought to consent, but most assuredly, I am not base enough to regard with indifference any act of the general government."<sup>10</sup> The world view Poinsett developed during his years abroad uniquely suited him to be President Jackson's eyes in South Carolina. Having seen the effects of weak national overnment in South America and Mexico, Poinsett believed in a strong national authority.

In May 1830 after Poinsett was recalled from Mexico, he met with President Jackson. It was then, it seems, that Poinsett became Jackson's primary agent within South Carolina. It was not until February 1832, however, that Poinsett began to focus on the tariff issue and on nullification. That month, he met with the architect of the American System himself, Henry Clay, and with former President John Quincy Adams, also a protectionist, on modifying the tariff. While no agreement was made, Poinsett told Adams that while both the nullifiers and unionists rejected the American system, only the nullifiers viewed nullification and secession as constitutional solutions under the states' rights doctrine<sup>11</sup>—an important distinction that mirrored Jackson's own thoughts on nullification.



Poinsett understood the contest in South Carolina was between advocates for states' rights who believed in a perpetual Union and decentralization of power and those who believed in a constitutional right to withdraw from the Union. This understanding was integral to his relationship with President Jackson. Both men were Jeffersonian: they disliked the loose constructionist interpretation that made protectionism legal, but they also eschewed secession. Because of this shared ideology, Jackson trusted Poinsett.

On 8 October 1832, the congressional and state elections were held in South Carolina. The Nullifiers swept the rural tidewater region, controlling thirteen of the seventeen parishes and winning 76 percent of the popular votes. Governor Hamilton called for a meeting of the new legislature on 20 October, ostensibly to nullify the tariff of 1832. While this victory seemed overwhelming, the election was much closer than the numbers indicate. The Nullifiers won less than a two-thirds popular majority in the entire state, garnering approximately seventeen thousand votes.<sup>12</sup>

At Seyle's Hall in Charleston on 15 October, Poinsett denounced those who sought to dissolve the Union in order to protect their interests. Moreover, he warned the opposition that "those who would trample upon our rights, endanger the liberty of the nation, violate that constitution which we venerate, and destroy the union," would be confronted "at all hazards." Furthermore, Poinsett flatly denounced not only nullification, but secession:

The word secession had been mentioned. No state, in my opinion, has such a right; and the Union could never allow a state to do so. It is, therefore, better to bear the evils from which we suffer than to tear asunder the Federal Compact. There is no middle course.<sup>13</sup>

The Unionist paper, the *Charleston Courier*, characterized Poinsett as a "man in a thunderstorm" standing erect and unmoved, while more "solid hearts were shivered to atoms by the forked lightnings."<sup>14</sup> After this speech, Poinsett was clearly seen as the leader of the Unionists statewide, and, most importantly, a staunch Jackson man.

The next day, Poinsett penned a letter to Jackson, which would be the first of many over the next few months. He informed Jackson of the Nullifiers' victory at the polls, warning him that a state convention would soon be called to instigate an act of nullification. According to Poinsett, most Nullifiers believed neither Congress nor the president could stop them. Poinsett lamented if this were so, there was nothing to do but to "witness the triumph of Mr. Calhoun." He insisted that the Nullifiers intended to break open the customs houses if the collector refused to cooperate. Promising to send a list of Nullifiers working in the customs house to Secretary of State Louis

McLane, Poinsett warned that even the post office was suspect after he was advised not to send a letter to the president through the post office at Charleston. Furthermore, Poinsett believed he and his fellow Unionists were going to have to defend themselves against "lawless violence and we ought not to be left entirely defenceless [sic], I mean without arms and ammunition."<sup>15</sup> Expecting violence, Poinsett stated that he and the Unionists were depending on the "measures which will be adopted by the executive and an earnest desire to lend our aid to render them effectual."<sup>16</sup>

On 29 October 1832, Jackson sent a confidential dispatch to Secretary of War Lewis Cass ordering him to warn the officers in charge of the forts in the harbor of Charleston to beware of any attempt to seize the forts: "The attempt will be made to surprise the forts and garrisons by the militia, and must be guarded against with vestal vigilance and any attempt by force repelled with prompt and exemplary punishment."<sup>17</sup> Poinsett's portrayal of the atmosphere in South Carolina confirmed Jackson's belief that the Nullifiers would resort to violence. In his dispatch to Cass, Jackson did not say that there "could" be an attempt on the forts, but that there "will" be one. Poinsett's report confirmed to Jackson that conflict was inevitable.<sup>18</sup> From this moment on, all the measures Jackson undertook in relation to the crisis were devised not to provoke conflict, but to prepare for it.

Jackson responded to Poinsett's allegations by sending George Breathitt, the brother of the governor of Kentucky, ostensibly as a post office inspector to ascertain the validity of Poinsett's claims of disloyalty in the post office and customs house.<sup>19</sup> Breathitt was also to inspect the forts in the harbor. While Poinsett saw personally to this last matter, he sent Breathitt to Columbia, where, on 19 November, the South Carolina legislature met in order to call a special convention. Five days later, by a vote of 136 to 26, the convention passed the Ordinance of Nullification, which declared the tariffs of 1828 and 1832 unconstitutional as well as null and void in South Carolina. After 1 February 1833, the ordinance continued, "it shall not be lawful to enforce the payment of duties within the limits of this state."<sup>20</sup> If force were used, then the people of South Carolina "will thenceforth hold themselves absolved from all further obligation to maintain or preserve their political connection with the people of the other states, and will forthwith proceed to organize a separate government."<sup>21</sup> The state courts were prohibited from questioning the authority of the ordinance or of subsequent acts to make it effective. A test oath was to be prescribed by the legislature, which bound all officers of the state to obey, execute, and enforce the Ordinance and Acts. In cases involving this oath that came to the courts, the jurors were compelled to take it. The legislature met as soon as the Convention adjourned. Governor Robert Hayne's message recommended the raising of a State Guard of twelve thousand and

suggested a bill of pains and penalties for those who disobeyed the Ordinance and an “act of treason” for those who might resist the state in the defense of the Union.<sup>22</sup> If the Federal government attempted to coerce South Carolina, the state would secede from the Union.

In the wake of these ominous developments, Poinsett reiterated to Jackson the allegiance of his Unionists:

We would rather die, than to submit to the tyranny of such an oligarchy as J.C. Calhoun, James Hamilton, Robert Y. Hayne, and George McDuffie and we implore our sister states and the federal govt. to rescue us from these lawless and reckless men.<sup>23</sup>

Poinsett, however, worried that some of his fellow Unionists were intimidated by the actions of the Nullifiers. He specifically mentioned the opinion of his Unionist colleague William Drayton, who believed that letting South Carolina leave the Union was the only option available to the United States Congress. Like Jackson, Poinsett believed that if one state left, the whole Union would dissolve, leaving the nation in an atmosphere much like that in Chile and Mexico. He appealed to Jackson, claiming, “If these bad men are put down by the strong arm, the union will be cemented by their conduct and by the vigour [sic] of the government, and you will earn the imperishable glory of having preserved this great confederacy from destruction.”<sup>24</sup> Wary of armed conflict, Poinsett worried that his Unionist coalition would be defeated without help from the federal government.

As much as Old Hickory agreed with Poinsett, he realized that he could not act yet. Responding to Poinsett’s correspondence, Jackson emphasized that if

a posse comitatus prove not strong enough to carry into effect the laws of the Union, you have a right to call upon the Government for aid and the Executive will yield as far as he has been vested with the power by the constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof.<sup>25</sup>

Jackson, conscious of the fact that his reputation had led some to believe he might act precipitously, told Poinsett they must proceed with a “firmness such as becomes those who are conscious of being right and are assured of the support of public opinion.” And they must, he continued, “perform our duties without suspecting that there are those around us desiring to tempt us into the wrong.”<sup>26</sup> Having informed Poinsett of his reasons for not involving the executive militarily, but fearful of an outbreak of violence before the message from Secretary of War Cass arrived, Jackson permitted Poinsett to show this letter to the commanding officer to receive whatever he needed

to defend the Unionists. Foreshadowing his forthcoming response to South Carolina's ordinance, Jackson stated at the end of this correspondence, "Nullification therefore means insurrection and war, and other states have a right to put it down."<sup>27</sup>

Jackson reiterated this sentiment several days later when he forwarded a copy of the proclamation to Poinsett with a letter stating, "the South Carolina ordinance and Hayne's recommendation to call out the militia was not rebellion, but treason." He assured Poinsett that after he received word of hostilities, he would communicate with Congress, and march fifty thousand men in forty days down to South Carolina. "The wickedness, madness and folly of the leaders and the delusion of their followers in the attempt to destroy themselves and our union has not its parallel in the history of the world."<sup>28</sup>

To publicly state his own position, President Jackson submitted a document known as the Nullification Proclamation. The document repudiated nullification and secession while endorsing a nationalist view of the Constitution. The president declared that disunion by armed force is treason and warned that the first magistrate could not avoid the performance of his duty. Jackson did ask South Carolinians to recant at the end, yet he issued the Nullification Proclamation to unequivocally state his administration's stance on nullification and the Union in preparation for violence.<sup>29</sup>

Jackson knew the message would hurt his party, for it endorsed a strong central government over states' rights. When a member of Jackson's inner circle suggested he delete portions of the message that might offend members of the states rights' ideology, Jackson replied: "Those are my views, and I will not change them nor strike them out."<sup>30</sup> Jackson's decision to write the document in such blunt fashion represented his true feelings on the Union and his conviction that conflict was inevitable. His proclamation was meant to put forth a new constitutional ideology not only to bring the Union together, but also to absolve himself, his administration, and Poinsett's Unionists from any wrong doing when conflict occurred.

The Nullifiers' own actions had proved Poinsett's reports to be true. On Christmas day 1832, Jackson wrote to Martin Van Buren explaining that he had just received a letter from Poinsett, who claimed that "nothing but force will stop the career of these madmen in the south."<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, if Poinsett's Unionists were to call for aid, he would promptly accept it, yet he would do this only after issuing a proclamation for the Nullifiers to disperse.<sup>32</sup> Even as Jackson was writing Van Buren, he was ordering 280 federal troops with heavy arms and ammunition down to the federal forts in Charleston. Poinsett was not satisfied. In an obvious reference to the Nullification Proclamation, Poinsett complained to Unionist colleague Drayton on 8 January 1833: "I go for practical results rather than metaphysical abstract rights."<sup>33</sup>

The same day that Jackson issued his proclamation, a Union Convention met in Columbia, South Carolina. It organized committees of correspondence dubbed "Washington Societies" to manage Unionist sentiment within South Carolina. In case of emergency, they were to become military companies. Illustrating Poinsett's importance to the Unionists, he was elected commander-in-chief of these Washington Societies for the entire state, with Robert Cunningham in charge of the western part and D.E. Huger head of the Charleston section. Poinsett assured the convention that President Jackson approved their plans for military organization and that the arsenal in Augusta, Georgia, would be opened for the upper part of the state if they needed arms. He then read a letter from Jackson in which the president pledged himself to put down nullification with all the power he possessed.<sup>34</sup> Many members cried "What have we to fear? We are right and God and Old Hickory are with us."<sup>35</sup>

As Unionists within South Carolina organized, Old Hickory continued in early January to establish a defensive framework. His first action came on 8 January when the White House introduced a compromise tariff through New York Senator Gulian Verplanck. The tariff was very generous to South Carolina. A week later, on 16 January, Jackson introduced a second measure. In this, Jackson stated to Congress the situation in South Carolina as Poinsett had related to him and requested power to move the customs houses at South Carolinian forts to battleships and federal forts because they could not be adequately protected from South Carolina's replevin process in Charleston. To stop the Nullifiers from procuring a tariff bond, Jackson asked for power to collect all duties in cash. He also requested jails to be established if the Nullifiers refused to house Carolinians imprisoned for violating federal laws.<sup>36</sup> This bill, which became known as the Force Bill, was seen by Nullifiers as a near call to arms. In reality, it was Jackson's last step in making sure that it was clear he had done everything he could do to avoid war.

Most historians believe that Jackson focused on the Force Bill to the detriment of compromise and to the damage of his own party because he viewed the nullification movement as the product of the ambitions of demagogues who sought to gain power for themselves. Many of Jackson's contemporaries believed he wanted nothing to divert attention from his plan to overawe South Carolina. Some suggested that the Force Bill was intended to nullify tariff reform.<sup>37</sup> Yet, Jackson's correspondence with Poinsett demonstrates that he was not as confrontational or as militaristic as many thought.

The day that Jackson presented the Force Bill to Congress, he wrote to Poinsett advising him to write often and to provide him with early warning of any armed force committing treason and of the individuals in charge. "We will strike at the head and demolish the monster, nullification and secession at the threshold by the power of the

law.”<sup>38</sup> This statement really captures Jackson’s mindset. Together, he and Poinsett would destroy nullification and secession, not by force but by the power of the law.

For the next two months, Poinsett followed Jackson’s advice. He wrote to Jackson seven times in fourteen days at a time when the fastest mail service took four days to deliver even important mail from Charleston to Washington D.C. As the Nullifiers’ 1 February deadline loomed, Poinsett became increasingly anxious about the Unionist situation in Charleston, particularly as rumors of a Nullifier invasion into the city circulated. His first letter to Jackson in 1833 came with a copy of a circular letter addressed by Governor James Hamilton Jr. to the officers of his staff, instructing them to make all necessary preparations for the transportation of troops from the interior to Charleston. Poinsett claimed that while no troops had been moved in accordance with this order, “the governor’s aid[e]s are already actively engaged in making the necessary arrangements in conformity with the instructions contained in this circular.”<sup>39</sup> Poinsett’s portrayal of the situation was grim: “There are it is true some rash and violent men, who desire to bring on a contest with us or with the general government. I almost wish they could be gratified.”<sup>40</sup>

Despite this statement, Poinsett continued to seek a legal remedy. As the Nullifiers mobilized to invade Charleston, Poinsett was worried that his Unionist force<sup>41</sup> would be overwhelmed if armed conflict began. A committee of lawyers that he had created to ascertain whether the new laws passed by the Ordinance could enforce the revenue laws had not yet rendered a decision, and he saw no way under state law that those laws could be enforced.<sup>42</sup> Poinsett worried that open conflict would occur the moment the Nullifiers refused to obey the federal customs official, and that when that happened, he and his militia, which was not ready, would be called forth by the federal marshal. He lamented to Jackson that the Unionists were unwilling to form a posse merely upon the authority of a federal marshal because they feared that, if taken prisoner, they would be subject to prosecution under the laws of the state. Rather than acting independently, they wanted Jackson to call out the state militia, so they would be acting directly upon a presidential order.<sup>43</sup> Poinsett warned Jackson that even if the marshal called out the posse, there was a “disinclination on the part of the majority of the Union Party in Charleston to join in mortal conflict with their adversaries as a part of the Posse.”<sup>44</sup> Many Unionists feared that if they acted unilaterally as the *posse comitatus* and lost, they would be at the mercy of the Nullifiers. Moreover, Poinsett stated that even he was hesitant to order his forces to act because it was “certain in such a contest that father would be arrayed against son and brother against brother.”<sup>45</sup>

While Poinsett was willing to lead the Unionists into battle, even without federal aid, he admitted that without a strong majority, he could not “expose a few brave men to the certainty of defeat.”<sup>46</sup> He believed if federal troops were stationed in

South Carolina, it would embolden his men. He exclaimed to Jackson, "Would not raising, embodying and marching troops to Charleston be an overt act of treason? Would it not be humanity [sic] to prevent the accumulation of these forces in this city?"<sup>47</sup> Poinsett feared for the Unionist Party and for his own safety. He was eager to hear what Jackson's course would be in such an event, "not to hasten a conflict, but in order to be prepared to coordinate activities with federal forces."

Again, on 20 January, Poinsett reiterated his fear over an invasion of Charleston saying, "we shall be exposed to their insults, which I much doubt if with all the Christian forbearance we can exercise, we can long brook."<sup>48</sup> With Charleston secure, Poinsett believed their next move would be secession. He assured Jackson that:

I never will suffer these men to withdraw the state of South Carolina from the Union. I will raise the standard against them instantly, but to do so with affect and with the united action of the Union party, they must act with the countenance of the federal government. The threats of the Nullifiers, that the air shall be darkened with our carcasses as traitors, appall some, who I believe would have stout hearts if they believed themselves safe from such an ignominious death.<sup>49</sup>

With this last statement, Poinsett hoped to convince Jackson that the Unionists would be more confident with a federal presence. Moreover, Poinsett stated that he believed the Nullifiers' intentions of invading Charleston were meant to bring on a contest with the federal government so that other states might come to their aid.<sup>50</sup>

Despite all of Poinsett's warnings, Jackson still hesitated to commit federal troops to the state. The president responded to Poinsett, telling him not to fear any assemblage of force in Charleston and reassuring him that "I can if need be, which god [sic] forbid, march two hundred thousand men in forty days to quell any and every insurrection, or rebellion that might arise." He sent special orders to General Winfield Scott, commanding federal troops in Charleston Harbor saying: "it is the most earnest wish of the president that the present unhappy difficulties in South Carolina should be terminated without any forcible collision," but if this were not possible that there should be no question that "if such collision does occur it shall not be justly imputable to the United States."<sup>51</sup>

As Poinsett continued to lobby Jackson for a federal presence in the state, he lashed out at Unionist opinion, which claimed executive intervention was unnecessary. William Drayton wrote to Jackson in mid December asking him not to intervene militarily under existing circumstances. Angry that Drayton did this without his knowledge or consent, Poinsett penned a letter to him. He sarcastically asked the congressman what the Unionists would do if the Nullifiers decided to take Charleston and stated,

"The artillery is in the hands of our opponents, and even if we had the ordnance we have no artillery men. Five thousand men have volunteered, and those from Richland and Sumter are anxious to be brought down to insult us." Poinsett asked Drayton: "is embodying and marching men to oppose the laws of the United States an overt act of treason?" Poinsett believed it was, and he reiterated his firm belief that such a situation could only be resolved with the intervention of the president, as he saw no other way to enforce the revenue laws.<sup>52</sup>

Poinsett was persistent. On 30 January he wrote to Jackson:

So much anxiety is expressed by the members of the Union party on the subject of the advance of the States Rights forces from the interior, that you must pardon me for troubling you so often on the subject.

He then advised the president to encamp a one-thousand-man army at the United States arsenal to deter any Nullifier march on Charleston. Hoping to find a way around Jackson's hesitation over legalities, Poinsett stated there was no constitutional objection to this maneuver.<sup>53</sup> A law from 1795 and another from 1807 gave Jackson all the technical power he needed to call out state militias and use federal troops to enforce federal law.<sup>54</sup> Yet even if he could lawfully do so, Jackson would not make any move that could be considered tyrannical. He explained his calculated pause to Van Buren: "I must appeal to Congress to give authorities the power to apprehend traitors. . . . Was I therefore to act without the aid of Congress, or without communicating with it, I would be branded with the epithet, tyrant."<sup>55</sup>

As Jackson sought to build support for the Force Bill, Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, whom Poinsett believed would not budge on tariff reform, was putting together a compromise bill. Hoping to keep Jackson from claiming any credit for defusing the situation, he quickly presented his compromise tariff on 12 February 1833. His compromise guaranteed that no duty was to exceed 20 percent after a duration of a decade.<sup>56</sup> Anxious to end the standoff, Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina as well as other moderate Nullifiers were willing to listen to Clay's proposal. Moreover, Calhoun wanted to deny the president any credit in the peaceful ending of the controversy. Clay the protectionist and Calhoun the Nullifier had little regard for Jackson and enough in common to work together both for the sake of compromise and to defeat their shared political nemesis.

Through his contacts in the House of Representatives, Clay substituted his own compromise tariff for the Verplanck Bill. Clay's bill, known as the Compromise Tariff of 1833, passed both houses of Congress on 1 March 1833. The new tariff put many protected goods on the free list and provided that rates on protected products would



be lowered in gradual stages to the 20 percent level by mid 1842.<sup>57</sup> Nullifiers construed the tariff as a victory due to their threats, and they never renounced nullification. As a final act of defiance, South Carolina nullified the Force Bill on 18 March 1833. President Jackson decided to ignore this last act of defiance.

Throughout early 1833, Jackson hoped Poinsett's *posse comitatus* would be enough to deter any conflict until Federal troops arrived, but Poinsett's claims to the contrary kept him focused on quick passage of the Force Bill. Poinsett's role in keeping Jackson preoccupied with the threat of hostilities is shown in a letter from Silas Wright to Martin Van Buren dated 13 January 1833. Wright's letter reported a meeting he had with President Jackson and Secretary of War Louis McLane. Wright stated that Jackson did not believe any bill passed in regard to the tariff would prevent hostilities in South Carolina, but he hoped it would satisfy the rest of the South so that when violence commenced, it would not interfere. Wright indicated that McLane also believed that tariff reform would not prevent armed conflict. Lastly, he explained that a letter from General Winfield Scott had just been received. Scott said he, too, believed there was nothing that could prevent bloodshed.<sup>58</sup>

Throughout the crisis, Poinsett made it clear that the Nullifiers real object was secession and that even though the crisis was over, they were "determined to go on in their mad career."<sup>59</sup> Jackson also believed Nullification was a prelude to something larger. Writing to the Reverend Andrew J. Crawford on 1 May 1833, Jackson explained that Clay's tariff bill was more protectionist than his own. He prophetically stated, "if this is not protection, I cannot understand, therefore the tariff was only the pretext and disunion and a southern confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro, or slavery question."<sup>60</sup>

Poinsett's admonitions as well as Jackson's particular idea of republicanism led him to believe the Nullifiers were using the tariff as an excuse to create a southern confederacy. As Richard Latner pointed out in his article "The Nullification Crisis and Republican Subversion," Jackson's particular view of republicanism led him to find the source of nullification in ambitious men seeking to create a southern confederacy, rather than in slavery; it also explains why he lost faith in tariff reform and relied on seemingly military measures.<sup>61</sup> It was Poinsett's correspondence and the nature of those letters, however, that solidified Jackson's beliefs and contributed to his decisions during the crisis.

## NOTES

1. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833–1845* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 196–97.
2. James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (Boston, 1866), Volume 3, 284–85.

3. William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965), 234.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Andrew Jackson, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, ed. John Spencer Bassett (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1929), 4:462–63. Andrew Jackson to Brigadier-General John Coffee, 17 July 1832.
6. The first biography of Poinsett was Charles J. Stille's, *The Life and Services of Joel R. Poinsett, The Confidential Agent in South Carolina of President Jackson During The Nullification Troubles of 1832* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 1888). The only other two biographies are written by Fred J. Rippy, *Joel Roberts Poinsett: Versatile American* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1935) and Herbert Everett Putnam, *Joel Roberts Poinsett: A Political Biography* (Washington D.C.: Mimeoform Press, 1935). For a more recent narrative, see George Anthony Hruneni Jr., "Palmetto Yankee: The Public Life and Times of Joel Roberts Poinsett: 1824–1851" (PhD., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1972) and Joshua Cain, "Jacksonian Nationalist: Joel R. Poinsett's role in the Nullification Crisis" (M.A., Georgia Southern University, 2008) and Ron Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2008).
7. While Stille defined Poinsett by his role in the Nullification Crisis, more historians have covered Poinsett's roles in Latin America. For an account of his time in Chile, see Dorothy M. Parton, *The Diplomatic Career of Joel Roberts Poinsett* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1934). Also see Rippy, *Versatile American* and Putnam, *A Political Biography*. For a more recent narrative, see Feather Crawford Freed, "Joel Poinsett and the Paradox of Imperial Republicanism: Chile, Mexico, and the Cherokee Nation, 1810–1841" (M.A., University of Oregon, 2008), 12–40.
8. For a discussion of Poinsett's time in Mexico, see Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800– 1830* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941) and William Ray Manning, *Early Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Mexico* (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1916), 42. Chapters on Poinsett in Mexico can also be found in Rippy and Putnam's works. For a more recent narrative, see Hruneni, "Palmetto Yankee," and Freed, "Paradox of Imperial Republicanism," 41–74.
9. Throughout Poinsett's life he displayed a desire to be distinguished militarily. During his time as consul general in South America he had participated in fighting on behalf of Chilean independence and hoped to return to the U.S. in time to participate in the War of 1812. Before being appointed consul general, he had sought a position as quarter master general in the army. While Jackson chose Poinsett as his man in South Carolina for the latter's stance on nullification, as well as his intimate knowledge of Charleston and South Carolina, Poinsett was also able to provide invaluable military reconnaissance during the crisis.
10. Stille, *Life and Services*, 57.
11. Joel R. Poinsett, *Calendar of Joel R. Poinsett Papers in the Henry D. Gilpin Collection*, ed. Grace E. Heilman and Bernard S. Levin (Philadelphia: The Gilpin Library of the Historical Society of Philadelphia, 1941), 98. Joel R. Poinsett to Dr. Joseph Johnson, 25 January 1832.
12. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 254–55.
13. *Republican* (Savannah), 25 October 1832. Poinsett's statements at Seyle's Hall show that he publicly denied the right of secession, possibly making him one of the first statesmen to do this. Previously, Remini stated that Jackson was the first and only statesman of the early national period to deny publicly the right of secession; see Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833–1845* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 242. Jackson always believed secession to be illegal, but he did not publicly state this until 10 December 1832.
14. *Charleston Courier*, 24 October 1832.

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15. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 4:481–82. Poinsett to Jackson, 16 October 1832.
  16. Ibid.
  17. Ibid., 4:483. Jackson to Cass, 29 October 1832.
  18. Ibid., 4:474–76. Jackson to Secretary of the Navy Levi Woodbury, 11 September 1832 and Jackson to Andrew J. Donelson, 17 September 1832. Prior to Poinsett's letter in October, Jackson received information from an anonymous informant that Nullifiers were attempting to recruit officers of the army and navy in the event of hostilities. This source also stated that after the fall elections, the Nullifiers would convene a congress to consider using nullification. Six days later Jackson wrote that he was advised those efforts were successful, and that Nullifiers were "determined to push matters to extremities, and expected to gain possession of the forts in the harbor." Poinsett's letter of 16 October reiterates these concerns, confirming to Jackson the intentions of the Nullifiers. Moreover, given the similarities of these concerns, it is possible that Poinsett was Jackson's anonymous source.
  19. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 4:485. Jackson to George Breathitt, 7 November 1832.
  20. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 263.
  21. Chauncey Samuel Boucher, *The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina* (The University of Chicago Press, 1916), 215.
  22. Putnam, *Joel Roberts Poinsett*, 130.
  23. Ibid., 4:491. Poinsett to Jackson, 29 November 1832.
  24. Ibid.
  25. Joel Roberts Poinsett Papers (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania), Vol. 7, Folder 6, Andrew Jackson to Joel R. Poinsett, 2 December 1832.
  26. Ibid.
  27. Ibid.
  28. Ibid.
  29. Leonard W. Levy, *State Papers on Nullification* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 97.
  30. Parton, *Life*, Vol. III, 467.
  31. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 505. Jackson to Martin Van Buren, 25 December 1832.
  32. Ibid.
  33. Stille, *Life and Services*, 76.
  34. Rippy, *Versatile American*, 153.
  35. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 504. James O'Hanlon to Jackson, 20 December 1832.
  36. Richard E. Ellis, *The Union at Risk* (Oxford University Press, 1987), 94.
  37. Merrill D. Peterson, *Olive Branch and Sword—The Compromise of 1833* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 57. Peterson is mistaken in the idea Jackson sought to overawe the Nullifiers, his correspondence to Poinsett indicates a calculated response, intended to avoid provocation.
  38. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 5:5. Jackson to Poinsett, 16 January 1833.
  39. Ibid., 5:6. Poinsett to Jackson, 16 January 1833.
  40. Ibid. As the Commander-in-Chief of the Union party, Poinsett did not want to lose any potential

armed conflict to the Nullifiers.

41. Rippy, *Versatile American*, 154. Any armed resistance to the Nullifiers would be coordinated by Poinsett through the Washington Societies. While many joined these organizations, Poinsett believed their numbers were not equivalent to the Nullifiers.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 5:9–10. Poinsett to Jackson, 29 January 1833.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 5:8. Poinsett to Jackson, 19 January 1833. Poinsett claimed parties sympathetic to the Nullifiers in Georgia and North Carolina were offering their services to the Nullifiers. Poinsett specifically asked Jackson for arms from the federal arsenal in Augusta, GA, to guard South Carolina's border with Georgia.

51. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 280.

52. Stille, *Life and Services*, 76.

53. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 5:13. Poinsett to Jackson, 30 January 1833

54. Meacham, *American Lion*, 241.

55. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 5:2. Jackson to Van Buren, 13 January 1833

56. Hruneni, "Palmetto Yankee," 206.

57. Donald J. Ratcliffe, "The Nullification Crisis, Southern Discontents, and the American Political Process," *Nineteenth Century History* 1 (Summer 2000): 19.

58. Bassett, *Correspondence*, Silas Wright to Martin Van Buren, 13 January 1833.

59. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 5:23–24. Poinsett to Jackson, 28 February 1833.

60. Bassett, *Correspondence*, 71. Jackson to Reverend Andrew J. Crawford, 1 May 1833.

61. Richard Latner, "The Nullification Crisis and Republican Subversion," *The Journal of Southern History* 43 (February 1977). While Jackson did not believe tariff reform would work, he did offer a better tariff bill than Clay in January 1833. Moreover, Jackson's seemingly military measures were wholly defensive in nature and not meant to provoke.

**“Ever Able, Manly, Just and Heroic”:  
Preston Smith Brooks and the Myth of Southern Manhood**

Ken Deitreich

Although he was a central figure in a notorious event of American history, namely this May 1856 assault upon Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, Preston Brooks is largely a forgotten figure today. Even professional historians have shown little interest in him. As of this writing, Robert Neil Mathis’s 1978 article in *South Carolina Historical Magazine* represents the only serious scholarly work yet done on Brooks.<sup>1</sup> This lack of interest is due, at least in part, to the fact that Brooks is largely regarded as a villain, an unthinking brute who savagely attacked a congressional colleague for simply speaking his mind.<sup>2</sup> The epitaph quoted above in the title of this study indicates, however, that other contemporaries viewed him in a more positive light.<sup>3</sup> But, love him or hate him, there is no denying Brooks’s place in history. His assault upon Sumner, an incident history remembers as the “Caning of Sumner,” both drew upon and exacerbated the sectional tensions that hastened the coming of the Civil War. As a key player in an incident of such notoriety, Brooks warrants a greater degree of historical scrutiny than he has heretofore received.

Contemporary reaction to the “Caning” was both extreme and predictably sectional.<sup>4</sup> Fairly typical of northern reaction was a *New York Tribune* editorial that loudly proclaimed: “No meaner exhibition of Southern cowardice – generally miscalled Southern chivalry – was ever witnessed.”<sup>5</sup> Southerners argued, with equal fervor, that Sumner had only gotten what he deserved. Brooks suddenly found himself hailed as the hero of the South.<sup>6</sup> These opposing sentiments continue to influence modern perceptions of Brooks and the attack upon Sumner.<sup>7</sup>

But what seems to be missing from these contrasting images of Brooks is a sense of the man himself: who he was and why he attacked Charles Sumner. This paper seeks to address this oversight by taking a fresh look at the motivations for his attack within the context of his life-story. Specifically, it seeks to understand the antebellum notions of manhood that may have influenced Brooks in general, and what role such notions may have played in the violent events of 23 May 1856.

The culture of violence within the antebellum South was an important context for any appraisal of Brooks’s actions.<sup>8</sup> Nineteenth-century southern males have been described by contemporaries and historians alike as “swaggering, belligerent . . . quick to take offense, quick to go to war, and, when at war, quick to mount a direct assault.”<sup>9</sup>

This predilection for violence may have been even more pervasive among the planter elite, whose members were taught from an early age to think of themselves as the better sort and who embraced certain qualities, often associated with chivalry, that included honor, morality, veneration of women, and, especially, martial spirit.<sup>10</sup> Just as blacks were indoctrinated to their status as slaves, so, too, were upper-class southern whites indoctrinated to their status as masters. While slaves were trained to be submissive and obedient, upper-class whites were trained to be dominant and commanding. Given the nature of southern society and the need to control a large slave population, this indoctrination process was, arguably, essential to the maintenance of the region's social structure. If the plantation system were to survive, it was essential to develop a cadre of strong and aggressive males capable of sustaining it.<sup>11</sup> All of these factors, when combined with the wealth, isolation, and nearly autocratic authority that plantation slavery afforded, bred within planters a belief that they were superior not only to their slaves but to their white neighbors as well.<sup>12</sup>

Preston Smith Brooks was born on 6 August 1819 near the village of Edgefield Court House, South Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Few communities in America can claim to have produced as many noteworthy public figures as the sprawling Edgefield District, a list that included Governors Francis W. Pickens and Pierce Mason Butler, Alamo defenders James Bonham and William Barrett Travis, General James Longstreet, United States Senators Andrew Pickens Butler, Lewis T. Wigfall, "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, and, more recently, J. Strom Thurmond.<sup>14</sup> In addition to this tradition of political and military leadership, Edgefield also possessed a well-deserved reputation for violence and mayhem. Lewis Wigfall alone is known to have fought at least two duels during his life and to have come close to duelling on three other occasions.<sup>15</sup>

Brooks possessed an extremely distinguished pedigree. His father, Whitfield Brooks, Sr., was a successful planter and slave-owner who had served after 1814 as commissioner in equity for Edgefield District. Through his paternal grandfather, Zachariah Smith Brooks, Preston claimed kinship with the Butler clan, one of the most powerful families in the antebellum South. Included among his esteemed Butler kin were the Revolutionary War hero General James Butler, Pierce Mason Butler and his brother Andrew Pickens Butler, and James Butler Bonham.<sup>16</sup>

Growing up as a member of the planter elite – with their aristocratic pretensions – in such a combative community environment, young Brooks was constantly reminded of his elite status and of the obligations that it carried. Indeed the image of his cousin James Bonham facing down hordes of Mexican soldiers at the Alamo must have made a powerful impression upon him and left no doubt as to what was expected of him as a white southern male.<sup>17</sup>

Judging from what is known of him, he not only understood those expectations, but actively endeavored to fulfill them and to project the image of an aggressive and commanding man.<sup>18</sup> At South Carolina College, Brooks earned a reputation as a capable student and “a favorite with the ladies”<sup>19</sup> who engaged in rowdy behavior. He was disciplined for such infractions as leaving campus without permission, frequenting a local tavern, and fighting with another student. Then in November 1839, just before he was due to graduate, Brooks attempted to break his brother James Hampden Brooks out of jail. The incident ended peacefully, but it proved the last straw for the faculty, who expelled Brooks without granting his degree.<sup>20</sup>

This aggressive behavior continued. During the 1840 gubernatorial campaign, Brooks became embroiled in a bitter and potentially deadly dispute with Lewis T. Wigfall, which led to a duel on 11 November. Both men suffered serious injuries: Wigfall was struck in the leg; Brooks in the hip, incurring a painful wound that took weeks to heal. Despite the fact that both men were lucky not to have been killed, the duel failed to resolve the dispute. Brooks and Wigfall nearly fought a second duel in July 1841.<sup>21</sup>

This same desire to prove himself an aggressive southern male would be, this study contends, at least partly to blame for the attack upon Sumner fifteen years later. The immediate provocation was, of course, Sumner’s “Crime Against Kansas” speech (19–20 May 1856) in which he described South Carolina’s Senator Andrew Butler, Brooks’s cousin, as one who had:

read many books of chivalry, and believes himself a chivalrous knight, with sentiments of honor and courage. Of course he has chosen a mistress to whom he has made his vows, and who, though ugly to others is always lovely to him; though polluted in the sight of the world, is chaste in his sight – I mean the harlot, Slavery. For her, his tongue is always profuse in words. Let her be impeached in character, or any proposition made to shut her out from the extension of her wantonness, and no extravagance of manner or hardihood is then too great for this senator [Butler]. The phrenzy [sic] of Don Quixote, in behalf of his wench, Dulcinea del Toboso, is all unsurpassed.<sup>22</sup>

Sumner’s meaning could not have been clearer. Butler and his fellow southerners might claim to be paragons of Christian virtue, but in their slavish devotion to slavery they were, in fact, baser than the poor whites whom they so despised. Having established their dominance over the weak and the defenseless, southerners now threatened to break up the national government if it did not assist them in perpetuating their exploitation and barbarism.<sup>23</sup> But even worse was to come. The next day (20 May),

Sumner continued his attack upon Butler, ungraciously mocking Butler's speech impediment, which had been caused by a prior stroke. Referring to Butler's recent remarks on Kansas, Sumner said that Butler had "discharged the loose expectoration of his speech" upon the people of the Territory.<sup>24</sup>

In a speech that dripped with venom, these passages are particularly offensive, even to the modern reader. Sumner had clearly abandoned any pretense of forensic analysis and was simply indulging in the basest sort of character assassination. As might be expected, Sumner's speech provoked strong outrage among his Democratic opponents. Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois roundly condemned the "libels (and) gross insults" of Sumner's remarks. In fact Sumner's words were deemed so offensive that Douglas had to wonder whether his purpose in making the speech was "to provoke some of us to kick him as we would a dog in the street, that he may get sympathy upon the just chastisement?"<sup>25</sup> Senator James Mason of Virginia declared that only his duty to his state and his respect for the Senate's rules allowed him to sit and listen to such "loathsome deformities in accusation and vilification" as were contained within Sumner's speech.<sup>26</sup>

As expected, Brooks was outraged by what he regarded as an attack not only upon Butler, but on the entire South. As a self-styled southern gentleman, Brooks felt honor bound to respond.<sup>27</sup> As he later explained: "I should have forfeited my own self-respect, and perhaps the good opinions of my countrymen if I had failed to resent such an injury by calling the offender in question to a personal account."<sup>28</sup>

Brooks's decision to call Sumner "to a personal account" might soon make for good drama, but more significant here was the fact that Brooks chose not to challenge Sumner to a duel. First of all, believing as he did that "the moral tone of mind that would lead a man to become a Black Republican would make him incapable of courage," Brooks assumed that Sumner would not accept the challenge, especially as dueling was illegal in Washington D.C.<sup>29</sup> But a more fundamental reason for Brooks to refrain from challenging Sumner to a duel was that such an action would have lent the latter a social respectability that he (and a Republican at that) did not merit. That left only one alternative: physical chastisement.<sup>30</sup> But perhaps most significant was not that the "Caning" perfectly characterized Brooks's usual behavior, but rather that it was both typical and atypical. Despite his aristocratic upbringing, with its emphasis upon honor and "chivalric" conduct, not to mention the violent nature of southern life in general, it bears noting that Brooks was not, generally speaking, given to violent outbursts. In fact, as Robert Mathis pointed out, Brooks often went out of his way to avoid confrontation.<sup>31</sup>

Several events of the decade preceding the assault underscore Brooks's hypersensitivity regarding his personal honor. His controversial service in the Mexican War (1846–48) provides the focus. His regiment, the South Carolina Volunteers or Palmetto



Guards, saw action in a number of engagements, most notably at Churubusco, where they suffered extremely high casualties. Among the dead in that battle were his younger brother, Whitfield Brooks, Jr., and his cousin, Colonel Pierce M. Butler.<sup>32</sup> But while Whitfield Brooks and Pierce Butler both died heroically, Preston Brooks's own war record was far less heroic. Soon after arriving in Mexico, he came down with what was probably typhoid fever and was sent home to convalesce. Back in Edgefield, Brooks was so sharply criticized by neighbors that within a month he was begging the War Department to send him back to Mexico. In the end, he decided not to wait for orders and returned on his own initiative, too late as it turned out. By the time he reached Mexico again, the fighting was pretty much over.<sup>33</sup>

After the war, the perception continued to grow that he had acted less than honorably in Mexico. Matters came to head at the 1849 July Fourth celebration, at which Edgefield honored its Mexican War veterans in a public ceremony but completely excluded Preston Brooks from the proceedings.<sup>34</sup> When Brooks demanded an explanation, the event's organizers replied, so he reports, that he had been "placed on the same footing" with Milledge Luke Bonham. The latter, another Brooks cousin and Lieutenant Colonel of an infantry regiment, had been similarly criticized for his "delay in returning to the war" after being accidentally shot in the foot.<sup>35</sup> When told this, Brooks rashly declared: "to this I object for although I know Bonham to be a brave man – yet his courage has been questioned – mine has not." After an exchange of angry letters, Bonham demanded "a hostile meeting" to settle the issue. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, and the dispute was peacefully resolved.<sup>36</sup>

To an even greater degree than the "Caning" itself, the "Bonham Affair" clearly illustrates the importance that southerners attached to matters of honor. Obviously both Brooks and Bonham considered honor to be a deadly serious matter, one that was worth fighting for, even with a close relative. But in lashing out at Milledge Bonham, Brooks was really striking back at his Edgefield detractors. His emotional reaction to being placed "on the same footing" with Bonham may have been a response to his own sense of guilt at having fled the war zone. Brooks might claim to be indifferent to the "sly mendacity of hints," but the implication that he had failed to meet the expectations of southern manhood had perhaps struck a chord. The fact that Milledge Bonham was a relative and the brother of fallen Alamo hero James Bonham only served further to inflame the situation.<sup>37</sup>

As important as manly honor was, one should not overlook the role that political ambitions and hopes played in Brooks's self regard and in the events that were about to unfold. Elected in 1853 as the representative of South Carolina's Fourth Congressional District, the same district that had once elected John C. Calhoun, Brooks faced very

high expectations. And yet during his two terms in office he introduced no major legislation and had been criticized by constituents for being “a little too national” during the debates over the Kansas-Nebraska Act.<sup>38</sup>

In light of the criticism of his Mexican War service, his failure to duel Milledge Bonham and his – thus far – somewhat lackluster performance in Congress, Brooks’s attack upon Sumner takes on a deeper meaning than mere sectional politics. Sumner’s verbal assault upon Andrew Butler, while it undoubtedly outraged Brooks, also perhaps presented him with an opportunity for redemption, both politically and as a man. Having failed to defend southern and family honor on the battlefields of Mexico and back home in Edgefield, he would do so in the halls of Congress.<sup>39</sup> If Brooks had, in fact, sought personal and political redemption through his assault on Sumner, he succeeded beyond all expectations. As noted at the beginning of this study, he was lionized as the avenging chastiser of northern abolitionists until his premature death (on 27 January 1857) from croup, less than a year after the “Caning.”

Preston Brooks was keenly aware of both his status as a member of the planter elite and the expectations that came with that status. It is equally obvious to us, and probably was to him, that he had often failed to live up to those expectations. With a few notable exceptions, the pattern that emerges from Brooks’s life was impetuosity, hypersensitivity, and unproductiveness – up to this point – as a warrior and politician, not the boldness of one who met challenges head-on. Certainly there was nothing particularly bold or courageous about the way in which he attacked a defenseless and immobilized Charles Sumner, a fact that northerners quickly seized upon.

This was well illustrated by an incident that took place only a few days after the “Caning” in which Congressman Anson Burlingame of Massachusetts accused Brooks of striking Sumner when the latter was not looking. Brooks promptly challenged Burlingame to a duel. A crack rifleman, Burlingame accepted; but when he chose the Canadian side of Niagara Falls as the location for this matter of honor, Brooks backed out, claiming that he dared not travel to Canada due to the northern mobs that would surely threaten him on the way. Northerners immediately branded Brooks a coward and mocked him in verse saying:

To Canada Brooks was asked to go  
To waste of powder a pound or so  
He sighed as he answered no, no, no,  
They might take my life on the way, you know.<sup>40</sup>

What does this study tell us, then, about the ideology of southern manhood? Was it, as some have suggested, largely a myth? The fact that Preston Brooks went to

such extreme lengths to prove himself manly and honorable demonstrates that, for him at least, the idea that men should be bold, aggressive, and courageous was not a myth. And despite the fact that Brooks may have felt that he had too often failed to live up to these standards, such an ideology proved no less meaningful to him or to many other fellow white southern males.

## NOTES

1. Robert Neil Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks: The Man And His Image," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 79 (October 1978): 296, 297.
2. Ibid.
3. Epitaph from Brooks's tomb in Willowbrook Cemetery, Edgefield, South Carolina.
4. David Herbert Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 1960), 310.
5. *New York Tribune*, 23 May 1856, found in "Secession Era Editorials Project," Furman University History Department, Furman Online Primary Source Collection (19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S.), <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=nytrsu560523a> (accessed 1 July 2005), 1.
6. A sampling of the support for Brooks in South Carolina newspapers can be found in the collected texts of the "Secession Era Editorials Project" of the Furman University Department of History in the section "Sumner Caning Incident." The main project page is at <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py>. The articles are: "SUMNER CANED BY COL. BROOKS," Greenville (S.C.) *Patriot and Mountaineer*, 29 May 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=scgmsu560529a>; no title given, Charleston (S.C.) *Mercury*, 28 May 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=scscsu560528a>; "BROOKS AND SUMNER," Spartanburg (S.C.) *Spartan*, 29 May 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=scsssu560529a>; "THE BROOKS MEETING," Laurensville (S.C.) *Herald*, 6 June 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=sclhsu560606a>; "Public Approval of Mr. Brooks," Columbia (S.C.) *South Carolinian*, 27 and 28 May 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=scscsu560527>; "A New Era," Charleston *Mercury*, 29 May 1856, <http://history.furman.edu/editorials/see.py?sequence=sumenu&location=Sumner%20Caning&ecode=sccmsu560529a>; All articles were accessed on 26 September 2010. See also Robert L. Meriwether, ed., "Preston S. Brooks on the Caning of Charles Sumner," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 52, no. 3 (January 1951): 3; Harold Schultz: *Nationalism and Sectionalism in South Carolina, 1852–1860: A Study of the Movement for Southern Independence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1950), 119; Donald, *Sumner*, 304–305.
7. Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 296, 297.
8. Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865–1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 13, 15, 16, 62; W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 352–61, 370; Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press,

1982), Preface, xv, 14–18; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1968), 28–40; Christopher J. Olsen, *Political Culture and Secession in Mississippi: Masculinity, Honor, and the Antiparty Tradition, 1830–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 171–72; Nicole Etcheson, “Manliness and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1790–1860,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (Spring, 1995): 61.

9. Ownby, 13–16, 62, 78–81, with quotation on 13; see also Etcheson, “Manliness,” 61, 62; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 352–61, 370; McWhiney and Jamieson, Preface, xv, 14–18; Olsen, 171; Cynthia Griffin Wolff, “‘Masculinity’ in Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” *American Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December, 1995): 598–600.

10. Of course all of these factors found expression in that most deadly component of southern culture: the code-duello. See John Fraser, *America and the Patterns of Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 12; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebeian in Virginia or the Origin and Development of the Social Classes of the Old Dominion* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1959), 1, 7; R Don Higginbotham, “The Martial Spirit in the Antebellum South: Some Further Speculations in a National Context,” *Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 1 (February, 1992): 5; Olsen, 121, 172; Edward R. Crowther, “Holy Honor: Sacred and Secular in the Old South,” *The Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 4 (November, 1992): 628.

11. W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 6; Wertenbaker, 2–4, 9, 23, 28, 29, 46–49, 61; Cash, 3–4; James Horn, “Cavalier Culture? The Social Development of Colonial Virginia,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 48 (1991): 239–40; Bernard Bailyn, “Politics and Social Structure in Virginia,” in James Martin Smith, ed., *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1959); 98–100; see also Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and The Rebel: A History of Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957); Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619–1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); 11–13; Crowther, 620.

12. William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 164, 166, 173, 176–77; Michał J. Rozbicki, *The Complete Colonial Gentleman: Cultural Legitimacy in Plantation America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 33; see also Martin Crawford, “Political Society in the Southern Mountain Community: Ashe County, North Carolina, 1850–1861,” *The Journal of Southern History* 55, no. 3 (August, 1989): 373–90; Stephen V. Ash, “Poor Whites in the Occupied South, 1861–1865,” *The Journal of Southern History* 57, no. 1 (February 1991): 42–43.

13. “Hon. Preston S. Brooks – Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks, and Proceedings of Congress on the occasion of his death,” *Southern Quarterly Review* 2, 2 (February 1857): 349; Brian D. McKnight, “Preston Brooks,” in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, ed., *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: a political, social, and military history* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 288–89; William L. Barney, “Brooks, Preston Smith,” in John A. Garrity, Mark C. Carnes, ed., *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 628; Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father’s House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 14.

14. Fox Butterfield, *All God’s Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 7, 13, 15, 16, 25; Francis Butler Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman: South Carolinian* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), 24, 25. Five current South Carolina counties, among them Edgefield County, now occupy portions of the former Edgefield District.

15. Alvy L. King, *Louis T. Wigfall, Southern Fire Eater* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 34–35.

16. John Belton O'Neill, "Whitfield Brooks" *Biographical sketches of the bench and bar of South Carolina* (Charleston, S.C.: S. G. Courtenay & Co., 1859), 473, 474, in *Making of America*, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;cc=moa;view=toc;idno=AGY0832.0001.001> (accessed 12 June 2010); "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks," 348–49; McKnight, "Preston Brooks," 288–89; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625, 628; Senator Josiah James Evans, "Eulogy of Preston S. Brooks," *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, Third Session, Thursday, 29 January 1857, in The Library of Congress, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875*, 499–500; Glenna Whiteaker Wilding (as told by Sr. Mary Samuel Carter, OSU), *River of Years: Genealogy and Narrative History of the Brooks-Carter Family of South Carolina* (Tangent Enterprises, 1994), 36–37; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 14. "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks," 348, 349.
17. John Fraser, *America and the Patterns of Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 12; Wertenbaker, *Patrician and Plebeian*, 1, 7; Rozbicki, 12, 16, 37, 59.
18. Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 626.
19. Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 299. He quotes from the Charleston *Courier*, 29 January 1857.
20. McKnight, "Preston Brooks," 288, 289; "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks," 349; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Evans, "Eulogy," 500; Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 299, 300; Daniel Walker Hollis, *University of South Carolina*, vol. 1, *South Carolina College* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1951), 138–39, 230; University of South Carolina Board of Trustees, "Trustees' Minutes" (South Carolina College), 27 November 1839, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; University of South Carolina Board of Trustees, "Faculty Minutes, University of South Carolina" (South Carolina College), Thursday, 4 January 1838, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Lawrence A. Keitt, "Eulogy of Preston S. Brooks," *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, Third Session, Thursday, 29 January 1857, in The Library of Congress, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875*, 501.
21. Fortunately the affair was settled peaceably if not amicably. King, *Louis T. Wigfall*, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35; McKnight, "Preston Brooks," 288, 289; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 299, 300; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 72, 73, 75, 91; Whitfield Brooks, Sr., personal journal, 3–4 November 1840, quoted in E. Mims Mobley, Jr., "Preston S. Brooks: A Right Honorable Man" (speech delivered before a meeting of the Greenwood Historical Society, 30 January 2005), first published in *Edgefield Advertiser*, 28 December 1851, 10–17, 30; C.W. Lord, "Young Louis Wigfall, South Carolina Politician and Duelist," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 59, 2 (April, 1958): 107, 110, 111; Butterfield, *All God's Children*, 12, 13, 14; Carol Bleser, ed., *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 61–62, 69.
22. Charles Sumner, "The Crime Against Kansas," in *Charles Sumner: His Complete Works* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1900), 5: 144–45.
23. *Ibid.*, 5: 145. "If the slave States cannot enjoy what in mockery of the great fathers of the Republic, he misnames equality under the Constitution - in other words, the full power of the national Territories to compel fellow men to unpaid toil, to separate husband and wife, and to sell little children at the auction block - then, sir, the chivalric senator will conduct the State of South Carolina out of the Union! Heroic Knight! Exalted senator! A Second Moses come for a second exodus!"
24. *Ibid.*, 5: 240.

25. *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, Appendix, 544–47; Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, v. II, *A House Dividing, 1852–1857* (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1947), 442; Boston *Commonwealth*, 22 February 1873, 3; Donald, *Sumner*, 286–87.
26. *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, Appendix, 544–47; Sumner, "The Crime Against Kansas," 5: 249; Donald, *Sumner*, 286–67.
27. Preston Brooks to John Hamden Brooks, Washington, D.C., 23 May 1856, in Robert L. Meriwether, ed., "Preston S. Brooks on the Caning of Charles Sumner," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 52, 3, (January 1951): 2; Etcheson, "Manliness and the Political Culture," 63; Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 14, 34, 138; David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 12, 17, 110–16, 222–29; Preston Brooks in the *Carolina Times*, 30 August 1856, *Congressional Globe*, Appendix, 632, 886; Charles S. Sydnor, "The Southerner and the Laws," *Journal of Southern History*, 6 (1940): 3–23; Jack Kenny Williams: "The Code of Honor in Ante-Bellum South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 54 (1953): 113–28; "Alleged Assault Upon Senator Sumner" (House Report No. 182, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session), 25, 42, 61–62; Donald, *Sumner*, 289, 290, 295; "Statement by Preston S. Brooks," 28 May 1856, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1927–1928): 221, as cited in Donald, *Sumner* 290, 291; James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988) 122, 150; New York *Evening Post*, 21 May 1856, 1; New York *Tribune*, 21 May 1856; *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, Appendix, 545, in Nevins, 2:439; Boston *Commonwealth*, 22 February 1873, 3.
28. "Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina (born 1819, died 1857) on the Sumner Assault," House of Representatives, 14 July 1856, in Alexander Johnson and James Albert Woodburn, ed., *American Orations: Studies in American Political History* (New York, London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1896–1898), 3:121–22. For "the moral tone...courage," see Preston S. Brooks, "Synopsis of Speech of, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Aug. 1856 at Columbia, S.C.," in M.W. Cluskey, ed., *The Political Text-Book or Encyclopedia, containing everything necessary for the reference of the Politicians and Statesmen of the United States* (Philadelphia: James B. Smith & Co., 1860), 85.
29. "Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina (born 1819, died 1857) on the Sumner Assault," 3:126.
30. *Ibid.*, 3:126. As Brooks himself later explained: "To punish an insulting inferior, one used not a pistol or a sword but a cane or horsewhip." See Preston S. Brooks, "Synopsis of Speech," 85. See also Donald, *Sumner*, 290, 291; McKnight, "Preston Brooks," 288–89; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 299, 300; Keitt, "Eulogy," 500; "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks," 349; Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 166–67; Sydnor, "The Southerner and the Laws," 3–23.
31. Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 296.
32. Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Keitt, "Eulogy," 500; "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S. Brooks," 368, 369; 30<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Executive Document No. 8: Message from the President of the United States, *Daily American Star*, Mexico City, Mexico, Vol. 1, No. 34, November 9, 1847, 1–2; as cited by "Roll of Honor - U.S. Casualties in the Battles of Churubusco and Contrera, PART THREE," Descendants of Mexican War Veterans website, <http://www.dmwv.org/honoring/chucon3.htm> (accessed 11 September 2010); Senator John A. Quitman, "Eulogy of Preston S. Brooks," *Congressional Globe*, 34<sup>th</sup> Congress, Third Session, Wednesday, 29 January 1857, 500; Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1950), 201, 246, 258, 265, 340, 342, 469, 511; P.M. Butler to Preston Brooks, 6 December 1846, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of

South Carolina; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 95–98; O'Neill, "Whitfield Brooks," 474; "Diary of Martha Caroline Means Brooks," unpublished original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, not paginated; K. Jack Bauer, *The Mexican War: 1846–1848* (New York: McMillan Publishing, 1974), 263, 265, 298–99, 511.

33. O'Neill, "Whitfield Brooks," 474; Quitman, "Eulogy," 500; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Keitt, "Eulogy," 500; Samuel Davis, Surgeon, South Carolina Volunteers, to Captain Preston Brooks, Alappa, Mexico, 2 May 1847, letter in the Preston Brooks papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Special Orders, No. 79, By Command of General Scott, H.L. Scott, A.A.A.G.; Headquarters, Palmetto Regiment, S.C.V., Puebla, Mexico, Regimental Orders, No. by order of Col. Butler, order is in the Pierce Mason Butler papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Preston Brooks to Dr. Samuel Davis, Edgefield (South Carolina), 25 September 1847, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

34. Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War*, 340; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 93, 96. The following two letters are in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina: Dr. Samuel Davis, formerly surgeon, Palmetto Regiment, Columbia, South Carolina, 7 October 1847 (copy); R. Jones Adjutant General, Adjutant Generals Office, Washington D.C., to Captain Preston Brooks, 3 September 1847. Both following letters, reprinted in *Edgefield Advertiser*, 19 April 1899, under heading "Some Ancient History," n.p., are in possession of the Old Edgefield District Genealogical Society, Edgefield, South Carolina: Joseph Abney, L.B. We[a]ver, John A. Addison, William Burrell, Edmund Melton, Lewis Covar, Wm. Whitaker, J.P. Hill, Committee to Preston S. Brook, 15 December 1849, P.S. Brooks to Lieuts. Abney and We[a]ver, Messrs, Addison, Melton, Covar, Whitaker, Burrell, and Hill, Committee, 15 December 15, 1849.

35. P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield Court House, South Carolina, 14 July 1849. The letter is in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

36. Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War*, 340; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 93. The following letters are in the Milledge Luke Bonham papers of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina: Milledge L. Bonham to Preston Brooks, 14 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield Court House, South Carolina, 14 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, Edgefield, 16 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield, 17 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, 18 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, 18 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, 19 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield Court House., 19 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, Edgefield, 20 July 1849; J.C. Simkins, Memorandum to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield, 20 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, Edgefield, 22 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Edgefield, 23 July 1849; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, Globe Hotel, Augusta, 25 July 1849, wherein the quoted characterization of the meeting is made; M.L. Bonham to P.S. Brooks, Near Augusta, 26 July 1849; P.S. Brooks to M.L. Bonham, Augusta, 26 July 1849; Arthur Simkins to (illegible recipient), 1 August 1849.

37. Henry, *The Story of the Mexican War*, 340; Burton, *In My Father's House*, 93; Barney, "Brooks, Preston Smith," 625; Milledge L. Bonham to Preston Brooks, 14 July 1849, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; the quoted words can be found in Preston S. Brooks to Lieutenants Abney and Weaver, Messrs, Addison, Melton, Covar, Whitaker, Burrell, and Hill, Committee, 15 December 1849, reprinted in *Edgefield Advertiser*, 19 April 1899, under heading "Some Ancient History," n.p.

38. Mathis, "Preston Smith Brooks," 300, 301, 302, with the quoted characterization on 302; McKnight, "Preston Brooks," 288–89; O'Neill, "Whitfield Brooks," 473; "Speeches of the Honorable Preston S.



Brooks,” 348, 350, 363, 364; Martha C. Brooks, “Extracts from the diary of my husband (Preston S. Brooks) for the children” 14 July 1851, 14 August 1851, 28 December 1851, original in possession of the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; Barney, “Brooks, Preston Smith,” 625; Keitt, “Eulogy,” 500; Wilding, *River of Years*, 36.

39. Schultz, *Nationalism and Sectionalism*, 115–16; *Congressional Globe*, Appendix, 876; Donald, *Sumner*, 289–90.

40. James E. Campbell, “Sumner-Brooks-Burlingame, or, The Last of the Great Challenges,” *Ohio Archeological and Historical Quarterly* 34 (1925): 435–73, with the quoted verses from the *New York Evening Post*, 24 July 1856 on 462; *Congressional Globe*, 34th Congress, 1st Session, 306 and Appendix, 631; Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, London: Columbia University Press, 1949), 389; *The Liberator*, 26 (6 June 1856), 91; Anson Burlingame as quoted in “The Caning of Sumner-Appendix-Voice of the North,” in *Charles Sumner: His Complete Works* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1900), 5: 304; “The Caning of Sumner,” 3; Donald, *Sumner*, 298, 307 308, 311.



## **“Firm and Immovable as Rocks”: Native American Women’s Empowerment in the Jesuit Missions of New France**

Ivy Farr McIntyre

### **Introduction**

In the fall of 1677, a young girl named Kateri Tekakwitha left her home, her family, and her way of life to join the French Jesuit mission at Kahnawake, a few miles from her native village near what is now Montreal, Canada. She was the product of what historian James Merrell calls the “Indians’ New World”: her mother was an Algonquian captive and her father a member of a Mohawk tribe.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1660s, a smallpox epidemic killed her parents, leaving Tekakwitha scarred, orphaned, and under the care of her uncle, who was vehemently against the French and the Jesuits. When Kateri was about twenty years old, she escaped from her family to join a community of women at the Christian mission of Kahnawake. There, Tekakwitha embraced Christianity with a particular fervor, adopting an extreme form of religious asceticism that surprised even her Jesuit mentors. She impressed a number of women with her zeal and created a group of followers. When she died only two years later, they continued her ascetical practices after her death.<sup>2</sup>

As Father Claude Dablon reported from the Quebec mission in 1672, some Indian women “remain[ed] as firm and immovable as Rocks before the insults of their infidel relatives,—preferring to suffer opprobrium and scorn and even to continue in extreme poverty, rather than betray their [Christian] Faith.”<sup>3</sup> What prompted Kateri and other women to leave their homes and the culture they had always known to follow a group of strange men and an alien religion, even while being scorned by the families they left behind? What did conversion to Christianity provide these women and why did some of them adopt the new faith so intensely that they risked displeasure from their traditional gods, and, in some extreme cases, even illness and death from ascetic rituals and self-mortification, all to follow Christianity? A great part of the answers to these questions must lie in the nature of their religious faith, an area difficult to comprehend fully through traditional historical analysis.

Such considerations aside, this paper will take a different approach to the problematic just outlined above. At this point, the suggestive and tentative aspects of the suggested methodology are fully acknowledged. The intent is to explore various roles of empowerment that Native American women could and did assume in the Jesuit Christian missions between 1670 and 1690. According to historian Bruce Trigger, the end of the seventeenth century marked a period of low “self-confidence” for Native Americans in New France.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it can be argued that French Jesuits capitalized

on this period of insecurity, conquering Native Americans, Europeanizing them, and, in the process, subjugating Indian women. But when examining the *Jesuit Relations*, the narrative documents constructed after 1611 from Jesuit missionary reports that chronicled annually the progress of conversion of several Native American peoples in New France, in light of recent sociological theories of empowerment, a much different picture of Christian Indian women in French Jesuit missions emerges.

The empowerment of Native American women varied by village and tribe. For example, the Iroquois tended to be matrilineal, while Algonquian peoples were patrilineal. These arrangements derived from different patterns of agriculture, hunting, and gathering; they resulted in women having different measures of power depending on their status in the tribe. Nevertheless, Indian women in what would become New France typically had more authority than early modern European women had in their society. The patriarchal and hierarchical nature of the early modern Catholic church taught some Jesuits to reject the relatively egalitarian nature of Native American society. According to some historians, the Jesuits sought to replace that egalitarianism with the asymmetric gender roles of French society.<sup>5</sup> The missions' heterogenous composition itself could have aided this alleged Jesuit policy, for they comprised a mix of many different tribes of Indians, especially following periods of disease or brutal warfare, as refugees flocked to the missions for shelter.

But if this was the case, some Native American women were not receptive to such a policy; instead, they found ways of making the missions work to their own advantage. Identity empowerment theory, a modern sociological concept, suggests that women can increase their quality of life, no matter how restrictive their circumstances, by increasing their awareness of their own decisions and actions.<sup>6</sup> Religion is one of the most important contributors to this self-awareness. Although patriarchal institutions often use religion to limit women's actions, lives, and opportunities, careful choices about religion can lead to an improvement of one's quality of life, sense of independence, and sense of self-worth.<sup>7</sup> As applied in the world today, identity empowerment theory suggests changes women can make in their daily lives that will enhance and improve their lives, no matter how restricted they are by their environment.<sup>8</sup> As applied over three hundred years ago to Christian Indian women in the missions of New France, identity empowerment theory lends a new perspective to the well-known *Jesuit Relations*.

### Recent Scholarship and Methodology

Most historians interpret the goal of the Jesuit missions in New France as Europeanization as much as Christianization, and they see the subjugation of Native American women to men as a crucial part of Europeanization. James Ronda argues that "[t]he

Indian who embraced Christianity was compelled, in effect, to commit cultural suicide.<sup>9</sup> Indians had to renounce their native ways and conform to European standards instead. Ronda argues that the Jesuits intended to bring about a cultural revolution, to Europeanize the Native Americans in every aspect of life. Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock assert that capitalism, colonialism, and Christianity all depend on gender inequality; when Europeans began their colonizing efforts, Native American women's status degraded. Native American women lost power, even though some vehemently resisted the new religion and the Jesuits.<sup>10</sup> Studies published since Etienne and Leacock's work give a more complex picture of Jesuit-Indian relations dependent on native background, tribal affiliation, relationships with capitalism and the New World economy, and the background of the colonials. Clara Sue Kidwell notes that important Indian women appear in every story of Euro-American encounter, particularly in aiding white men by translating.<sup>11</sup> Sexual relations were an important part of the interactions between Native American women and European men outside the Jesuit mission. Carol Devens contends that conversion to Christianity restricted Native American women in that the latter perceived little advantage in Christianity and felt limited by it. She further argues that Native American women preserved their autonomy by rejecting Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Karen Anderson has a similar view and interprets male antagonism toward women in fur-trapping societies. She discusses Huron and Montagnais Indians who, she asserts, transferred the aggression they normally released in traditional Indian warfare and dream ceremonies to "unruly" women once Indian men converted to Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

This study argues that women could claim autonomy through conversion as well.<sup>14</sup> Most of the recent work on women's empowerment through Christianity comes from psychologists and sociologists.<sup>15</sup> Sacred images, religious language, and church practices are often patriarchal in nature, yet women throughout history have represented a disproportionately large portion of the Christian population. The only historian to discuss women's empowerment through Christianity in this context is Natalie Zemon Davis in her study of Marie de L'Incarnation, a French woman who became a nun and helped found an Ursuline convent and the first hospital in New France. Davis argues that Marie, as a mystic, sidestepped European gender hierarchies within the convent. Davis also contends that Native American women expanded their public voice in New France society while in the confines of the Ursuline convents. Here she deals with women's empowerment in a cloistered environment, not the more open Jesuit missions investigated below.<sup>16</sup> Theologian Ursula King asserts that instead of being an oppressive institution for all women, Christianity has many links with feminism. She argues even further that Christianity and feminism are mutually essential for either

movement to be successful. She cites several “counter-cultural” traditions in the Christian church that produced extraordinary women, including female ascetics, nuns, saints, and mystics, but says that history fell silent on these topics until the feminist movement of the twentieth century. The Christian gospel calls for freedom and equality – although ecclesial institutions have not often emphasized those aspects – and King sees both feminism and Christianity as movements of liberation.<sup>17</sup>

This study reinterprets the *Jesuit Relations* in light of identity empowerment theory and proposes that converted Indian women used Christianity in part to claim three degrees of autonomy and power within the missions of New France: conversion, leadership, and, in extreme cases, asceticism. The first way in which Native American women claimed more power in the missions was through the process of simple conversion: women removed themselves from their native villages and chose to join a new community. Some women then created leadership roles in the missions by helping to convert others, by acting as translators, or by proselytizing to potential new converts. Through these roles, women claimed more power than they had had in their native communities, where men were the teachers and preservers of religion.<sup>18</sup> Only a few women claimed the third level of autonomy, namely, religious asceticism, a form of self-imposed punishment for perceived sin. The few women who adopted severe penitence rituals in the Christian community took greater control over their own faith and religious experience by seeking a more direct relationship with the Deity outside close Jesuit supervision. In each of these situations, women created a partial counter-culture to the one of unquestioning subordination that the Jesuits proposed, increased their own voices within the community, and enhanced their spiritual relationship with a higher power, all in the name of religion.

### Conversion

Converting to Catholicism was no easy task for an Indian woman, and the Jesuits often wrote about women who left their families to join the missions. Leaving her home and converting to Christianity was one way an Indian woman could claim more autonomy, for it entailed a decision to change her lifestyle. Kateri Tekakwitha is one example of a woman who went against her family's wishes to join the Christian missions. As a young girl, she lived with her uncle, who opposed Christianity. While Kateri was recovering from a foot injury, a Jesuit priest introduced her to the Christian faith, and Kateri asked to be baptized. A few months later, Kateri's older sister joined the mission at Kahnawake; soon after, Kateri defied her uncle and sneaked away from her home to join the mission herself.<sup>19</sup>

One Mohawk widow, who remains anonymous in the *Jesuit Relations*, came to Quebec in 1671 with her two small children in order, wrote Father Dablon, “to

secure greater freedom in her devotional exercises, from which she was diverted by her kinsfolk.”<sup>20</sup> In her native village she had possessed the status of *Oiander*, an inherited title in the Mohawk nation and one that was highly esteemed.<sup>21</sup> Her conversion to Christianity, wrote Father Dablon, “so incensed all her family that, out of spite, they degraded her from her noble rank, in an assembly of the Village notables.”<sup>22</sup> She had abandoned the wealth and comfort she enjoyed in her native village to join the Christian mission where she possessed nothing; she indicated thereby that for her there were seemingly no material benefits to conversion.

Historian Allan Greer suggests that bonds of friendship may have motivated some women to join Christian missions. Kateri Tekakwitha, for example, may have joined the mission at Kahnawake to be closer to her older sister, but once she established herself there, her conversion took on a much greater significance, as it did for many other women.<sup>23</sup> According to Greer, the Jesuits had very little contact with Christian converts after they performed baptismal rites, so older Indian women in these communities acted as confessors, preachers, and disciplinarians for other members.<sup>24</sup> Upon Kateri’s arrival at Kahnawake, a native woman who had been baptized with the name Anastasia appointed herself as Kateri’s “confessor,” and other women of the community taught Kateri and other newcomers the ways of the mission and the teachings of Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Native American women who moved to Jesuit missions and joined female communities also overcame the isolation they might have felt in their native villages, be it scorn from family members or relatives for accepting Christianity or for various other reasons.

## Leadership

Historians frequently mischaracterize the motives of native conversion to Christianity because French Jesuits did offer some material benefits to Indians who agreed to convert. Neither material goods nor improved opportunities for fur trading, however, explain why some Christian Indian women assumed leadership roles in the missions, teaching others about Christianity and serving as translators to help the Jesuits gather more converts. Christian Indian women defended the faith to Native Americans and other critics of Christianity and persuaded their families and other tribesmen to convert along with them. These women gained a level of autonomy beyond making the choice to convert to Christianity; they strove to have their voices heard in small groups of Indians as well as by entire nations. The leadership roles they accepted and created in the Christian community gained Christian women notoriety and increased their independence and autonomy.

The Christian Indian woman Marie Tsinouentes encapsulated these leadership roles. In 1669, Father Jean Pierron recorded that Marie had instructed a tortured captive “in our mysteries.”<sup>26</sup> Later, she defended the Catholic faith to a group of Dutch Protestants, who had long been enemies of the French and the Jesuits. When the Dutch criticized Marie for wearing a rosary, she and two other women defended the symbols of their faith. Taking them “boldly in hand,” Marie said, “You will all be damned,” and criticized them for seeking “only our Beavers, and not the salvation of our souls.”<sup>27</sup> Marie took a great risk in chastising this group of men, an act that would have been outside the prescribed gender role of Europeanized Christian women. According to historian Karen Anderson, “[f]or the seventeenth-century Jesuits, women’s subordination to men was part of God’s plan for humanity, necessary for good order in society, essential for the existence of Christian marriages, indispensable for human salvation.”<sup>28</sup> At least in these cases, Marie rejected European gender roles, and the Jesuit Pierron supported her decision.

Let us consider another example. In 1671, it was reported that one woman, perhaps the same Mohawk widow mentioned earlier, returned to the Mohawk nation in order to convince the people she had left behind to convert to Christianity.<sup>29</sup> After trying to persuade her father, she implored the entire nation: “People of Gannaouaé,” she said to them,

You listened to me, in times past, in the Councils; but now I much more deserve a hearing as I am addressing you regarding your eternal salvation, and the most important business that you have in this world. Listen to those who teach you and believe them; but renounce immediately with me those wicked practices devised by our arch-enemies, the demons of hell...Your attachment thereto . . . stops your ears, and prevents the doctrine of salvation, which is taught you, from reaching your hearts. Follow my advice; otherwise all the prayers that we daily offer to the divine Majesty on your behalf will avail you naught. Ah, my brothers, why do you not recognize the woes suffered in hell by those who have died in unbelief or in their sins, and who have not kept their promises made at Baptism? What a pity that I cannot make you understand the happiness that you will enjoy in heaven if you will believe me!<sup>30</sup>

This is an example of a woman who claimed the voice of a Christian missionary. As a former leader in her native village and a current leader in the mission, she implored other Mohawks to listen to the Jesuits and to convert to Christianity.

While some women spoke to their families and tribesmen to urge them to convert, other women aided the Christian mission directly and claimed more autonomy for

themselves by translating the Jesuits' messages to other Indians. Father Jacques Fremin, superior over the Jesuit missions to the Seneca Indians at St. Michel, lamented in 1670 that a captive woman had arrived at the mission and soon had developed a terrible illness for which he was powerless to help. At the last moment before her death, two Christian Indian women appeared and spoke words of comfort to her. "I asked them," Fremin wrote, "if they would have the kindness to act as my interpreters in procuring everlasting happiness for the sick woman,"<sup>31</sup> They complied and convinced the woman to convert just before her death. Father Pierron eventually replaced Father Fremin at Tionontoguen, the central village of the Mohawk nation. Around 1669, Pierron also described a nameless Mohawk woman who took pride in teaching the Christian faith to the children at the mission and was even so bold as to instruct him to complete what she had started.<sup>32</sup>

In assuming responsibility for the religious education of other converts, women also overturned traditional native gender roles. Before European contact, only the Indian men taught, learned, and perpetuated oral religious traditions formally, although women did relate religious stories to Indian children.<sup>33</sup> Men served as healers and shamans within Native American communities and also interpreted dreams, while women typically acted only as assistants to the male shamans.<sup>34</sup> Anastasia, Kateri Tekakwitha's "confessor," went even a step further, mimicking in this capacity the role of a Jesuit priest. Informal teaching provided an opportunity for Christian Indian women to step outside traditional and even contemporary gender roles while staying safely within the boundaries of Catholicism; after all, the Jesuits could not easily criticize a woman who was helping to win more converts to the faith.

### **Asceticism and Self-Mortification**

For some women, simple conversion to Christianity, relocating to the missions, and assisting to convert others were not enough. Several women took their faith to an extreme, perhaps in search of a more personal relationship with God. These were devout converts: one does not mortify her own flesh or expose herself to freezing water simply for the prospect of receiving an extra pound of maize or an extra blanket. It is clear that such material benefits did not solely motivate these women; they must have been moved by something much deeper.<sup>35</sup>

Father Dablon's 1672 story of a woman who took responsibility for her daughter's actions by inflicting punishment on herself is an example of one such devotee. The mother was so horrified to see her daughter talking to a man out in the field that "she took some small cords and made an instrument of discipline, like those that she had seen; and with this she beat her daughter when the latter rose the next morning."<sup>36</sup> Her daughter cried out and asked her mother what she had done to deserve such

treatment. The mother then wept, saying, "Must I then be the mother of a girl condemned? Must it be that I have borne and reared a daughter for the demons, and for eternal companionship with them in the cruel flames of hell?" She then beat herself "so severely that she long bore its marks on her shoulders."<sup>37</sup> Without any prompting from a Jesuit priest, this woman prescribed her own corporal punishment, blaming herself for a perceived sin she had committed in raising her daughter badly. Another young woman "was so filled with contrition" over committing a sin that, "resolving to make immediate confession, she went away into the woods and took a severe discipline in expiation of her sin" without waiting to see a Jesuit priest first.<sup>38</sup>

Kateri Tekakwitha participated in and perhaps even originated an unusual movement of religious asceticism and self-mortification in the mission at Kahnawake. After living at the mission for a few months, she and a friend sought out a native woman who had converted to Catholicism many years before. This friend, baptized Marie, had observed female Christian spiritualists and encouraged the young girls to isolate themselves within the mission, to live together, and to dress alike in order to build a community. The trio then took to confessing to each other, fasting, whipping each other, and mortifying their flesh.<sup>39</sup> Father Claude Chauchetière, the Jesuit missionary at Kahnawake, mentioned the trio in his relation of 1682: "You will be pleased to hear from me respecting the austerities practiced by certain savage women . . . it will show you their fervor."<sup>40</sup> He explained that he did not know where the women learned about these penitential rituals, but he suggested that the French nuns in Montreal practiced similar exercises.<sup>41</sup>

As already noted, one form of ascetical practice was self-mortification, which Christian Indians seem to have picked up from the Jesuits themselves. Archaeologists have discovered remnants of an object left at Fort Saint Joseph that resembles a cilice, a device used in this practice. Researchers suggest that the device's owner could have been a Jesuit priest, a Native American man or woman, or a French settler. *The Spiritual Exercises*, the Jesuit religious manual authored by Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, did not require members of the Society of Jesus to practice self-mortification. But if a Jesuit practiced penitence rituals under the guidance of a superior, the Society approved of the practice, as long as it was not excessive.<sup>42</sup> Some Christian Indian women may have imitated Jesuit mentors in their practices of penance; others constructed their own ascetic rituals from their environment despite discouragement from the Jesuits. In the bleak winter of 1676 an anonymous woman, pregnant at the time, removed all her clothing at the foot of a large cross in the mission cemetery. Two other women followed her example by making a hole in the frozen river and throwing themselves in, remaining submerged while they prayed a rosary. One of the women returned to her cabin without warming herself at all, lying down "on her mat with lumps of ice adhering to her shoulders."<sup>43</sup>



The Jesuits approved of Native Americans' use of asceticism as a tool for expiating sin as long as the Fathers themselves prescribed the punishment and as long as the women used it in moderation. But the Jesuits soon questioned the women's motivations, particularly after Kateri Tekakwitha's death, when more women at the Kahnawake mission began to practice self-mortification without the direction of the Jesuits, and when their penitence rituals became more and more severe. At this point, the debate over penitence rituals in the mission became a power struggle between the Fathers and female converts, and some women even left the mission in order to be "mistresses of their own bodies."<sup>44</sup>

Of course we cannot know exactly what motivated these women to adopt such severe penitential practices, especially without any guidance from the Jesuit missionaries, but clearly they sought a more personal relationship with the Deity – one that was not exclusively mediated by a Jesuit priest or a Christian male of any sort. Therein lay an increased personal autonomy. Whatever the reason, some women took extreme measures that set their experience apart from others in the Christian missions with the effect, if not necessarily the intention, of creating an autonomous and unmediated relationship with God.

## Conclusion

Identity empowerment theory outlines several distinct religious choices a woman must make in order to influence the quality of her everyday life. First, she must deliberately choose her religious beliefs rather than blindly follow traditions, cultural norms, or family traditions.<sup>45</sup> Each of the women noted in this study chose to join a Christian mission for personal reasons, reasons that we will probably never fully know. This decision was a difficult one, as it meant leaving her family, friends, and way of life to subscribe to a completely foreign culture and religion. Second, she must choose the degree to which she will participate in her religion.<sup>46</sup> Christian Indian women of New France practiced Christianity to varying degrees. Some made the decision to convert, moved to the mission, and never did much else that the Jesuits thought worthy of recording. Other women took on leadership roles in the community by teaching or converting other converts, translating for and advising the Jesuits, or punishing their children to teach them moral lessons. Still others adopted significant corporal austerities.

To say that the Christian Indian women of missions in New France were feminists would be a blatant anachronism. But as this study shows, these women – inspired by motivations both spiritual and mundane – exercised their agency by stepping outside their traditional and perhaps even their new Europeanized gender

roles as envisaged by the Jesuits. Many women left their families to find a community that could better fulfill their spiritual or social needs. Others carved out leadership roles within those communities so that they could have a direct influence over others. A few exercised their autonomy to an even greater level without the direct mediation of the Jesuits and sought a direct (and sometimes painful) relationship with the divine.

Despite the hierarchical and patriarchal nature of early modern Catholicism as taught by the Jesuits and by the French cultural model that both framed Jesuit thought and fueled missionary efforts in New France, some Christian Indian women actually found empowerment through their new religion. Through their roles as teachers, translators, advisors, disciplinarians, and practitioners of religious asceticism in various missions in New France, several women found in their new faith ways in which they could assert their own independence.

## NOTES

1. James Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact Through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989). Although he deals with Catawba Indians in what would later become the Southeastern United States, Merrell's concept applies to all Native American groups who came in contact with European colonials. Merrell argues that European settlement created a "New World" for the Indians that was as foreign to them as the "New World" of North America was for Europeans. European diseases, customs, religion, economy, trade goods, and desire for land altered Native Americans' ways of life in North America. Native Americans largely adapted to this extreme cultural shift, merging aspects of their traditional culture with European ideas and, in the process, creating an entirely new culture. Kateri Tekakwitha's life encompasses a number of aspects of the Indians' New World.

2. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied documents* (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896–1901), 62: 173–276. Numerous historians have investigated and retold the story of Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha. See Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 31–34, 47, 50–58, 125–27; Nancy Shoemaker, "Kateri Tekakwitha's Tortuous Path to Sainthood," in Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 49–71; Pauline Turner Strong, "Feminist Theory and the 'Invasion of the Heart' in North America," *Ethnohistory* 43 (1996): 691–94; K.I. Koppedrauer, "The Making of the First Iroquois Virgin: Early Jesuit Biographies of the Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha," *Ethnohistory* 40 (1993): 277–306. Her ascetic practices included fasting, remaining celibate, working without rest, praying throughout the night, mixing her food with ashes to take away its flavor, and beating her back with willow shoots. "The Lily of the Mohawks," she was beatified by the Catholic Church in 1980 and the process of her canonization might be nearing formal completion.

3. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 55:64.

4. After disease, the Iroquois wars, famine, and other problems brought about by European contact and settlement, the world of Native Americans in what is now the northeastern US and eastern Canada was surely in a state of crisis. Trigger describes it vaguely, saying: "It seems highly likely, however, that by the end of the seventeenth century a pervasive sense of political and economic debility by comparison with Europeans was influencing not only the mission Iroquois, but also those who remained in New York

State.... This appears to have produced a loss of self-confidence, which led a growing number of them to turn to Christianity as a source of spiritual renewal." See Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 167. Rather than turning to fatalism and resigning to Christianity, though, some Native American women accepted Christianity with fervor and flourished within their new religion.

5. This is the subject of Karen Anderson's book, *Chain Her By One Foot: The Subjugation of Native Women in Seventeenth-Century New France* (New York: Routledge, 1993). See her chapter 4 for more information on seventeenth-century European gender roles. For further comparisons between European and Amerindian women, see Natalie Zemon Davis, "Iroquois Women, European Women," in Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell, ed., *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500–1850* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 96–118.

6. C. Margaret Hall, *Women and Empowerment: Strategies for Increasing Autonomy* (Washington: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, 1992), 2.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. James Ronda, "'We are Well as We Are': An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (1977): 66–82.

10. Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Praeger Press, 1980), 25–42.

11. Clara Sue Kidwell, "Indian Women as Cultural Mediators," *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992): 97–107.

12. Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France," *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 461–80 and *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and the Great Lakes Missions, 1630–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 29.

13. Anderson, *Chain Her By One Foot*, 55.

14. Hall, *Women and Empowerment*, 121.

15. See, for example, psychologist Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak's "The Power, but not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves Through Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996): 17–29.

16. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 63–139.

17. Ursula King, "Christianity and Feminism: Do they need each other?," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 4 (2004): 194–206.

18. Europeans and Native Americans shared similarities when it came to religious gender roles. Although Native American women participated more actively in religious ceremonies than European women did, Indian men passed down oral traditions through sacred narratives and were teachers of religion, just as male church officials acted as theologians and performed religious services. See Davis, "Iroquois Women, European Women," 101.

19. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 54–58; Strong, "Feminist Theory in North America," 691.

20. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 54:280.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 58.
24. Ibid., 125–46.
25. Ibid., 127.
26. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 53:135–58.
27. Ibid., 53:183–93.
28. Anderson, *Chain Her By One Foot*, 55.
29. It is unclear whether there is a difference between the title of “*Oiander*” and “*Oriander*” or if this was a spelling variation or mistake on the part of the Jesuits, the English translator, or the editor.
30. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 55:264–65.
31. Ibid., 54:106.
32. Ibid, 53: 175: “She sometimes came to find me, with nine or ten Young girls that she had won over to the Faith,” Pierron wrote. She admonished him thus: “Here my brother...teach them well the principles of Christianity, and finish what I have begun.” See also 53:174; Pierron accounted the woman’s death as “the cause of much grief to me, because I lost the firmest support of this new-born Church.”
33. Davis, “Iroquois Women, European Women,” 101.
34. Ibid.
35. The center for Christian Indian women’s ascetic practices was at the Ursuline convents, which Carol Devens calls “the ultimate separate institution for females within the Church.” Devens argues that a few women who converted to Christianity preserved the female autonomy they had enjoyed in native society at these convents. “There,” she says, “they continued to stress the values of female autonomy, now in a format acceptable to the demands of the missionaries” (Devens, “Separate Confrontations,” 470). This study argues, however, that women preserved (or created) this sense of autonomy even outside of isolated convents, namely, within unsegregated Jesuit missions.
36. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 55:258.
37. Ibid., 55:259.
38. Ibid., 56:22.
39. Ibid., 56:176.
40. Ibid., 62:173.
41. Ibid.
42. José Antônio Brandão and Michael Shakir Nassaney, “Suffering for Jesus: Penitential Practices at Fort St. Joseph (Niles, Michigan) During the French Regime,” *Catholic Historical Review* 94 (2008): 487, 494; Peter Goddard, “‘Converting the Sauvage’: Jesuit and Montagnais in Seventeenth-Century New France,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 84 (1998): 221.
43. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 62:174–75.
44. Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 123.
45. Hall, *Women and Empowerment*, 51.
46. Ibid.

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**“Were you entitled to an answer. . . .”**  
**General Anthony Wayne and Major William Campbell**  
**on the Banks of the Maumee**

Sarah E. Miller

On 21 August 1794, Major William Campbell of the British Army and commander of Fort Miamis on the banks of the Maumee River sent the following message to General Anthony Wayne, a U.S. army commander in the Northwest Territory:

Sir: An army of the United States of America, said to be under your command, having taken post on the banks of the Miami [Maumee] for upwards of the last twenty-four hours, almost within the reach of the guns of this fort, being a post belonging to his Majesty the King of Great Britain, occupied by his Majesty's troops, and which I have the honor to command, it becomes my duty to inform myself, as speedily as possible, in what light I am to view your making such near approaches to this garrison. I have no hesitation, on my part, to say, that I know of no war existing between Great Britain and America.<sup>1</sup>

According to well-mannered eighteenth-century etiquette, General Wayne replied:

Sir: I have received your letter of this date, requiring from me the motives which have moved the army under my command to the position they at present occupy, far within the acknowledged jurisdiction of the United States of America. Without questioning the authority or the propriety, sir, of your interrogatory, I think I may, without breach of decorum, observe to you, that, were you entitled to an answer, the most full and satisfactory one was announced to you from the muzzles of my small arms, yesterday morning, in the action against the horde of savages in the vicinity of your post, which terminated gloriously to the American arms; but, had it continued until the Indians, &c were driven under the influence of the post and guns you mention, they would not have much impeded the progress of the victorious army under my command, as no such post was established at the commencement of the present war between the Indians and the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Major Campbell's brazen letter neglected to mention, as Wayne pointed out, that the fort he occupied had been built earlier that year squarely on American soil for the purpose of supporting the Indians of the Northwest Territory, who were then at war with the United States. Despite the 1783 Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution, Great Britain and the United States were still at odds, especially in the Ohio country. Confrontations between American settlers and Native Americans sponsored by the British had culminated in the Battle of Fallen Timbers fought the day before Campbell's and Wayne's initial exchange of letters. The Americans saw the British as instigators in the frontier violence, and tempers flared when Wayne's Legion came across the new British fort situated on soil claimed by the United States through international treaty.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers was a crucial stage in the struggle between the Native Americans of the Old Northwest Territory (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin) and the newly-formed United States of America. At the end of the American Revolution signaled by the Treaty of Paris (1783), Great Britain had agreed to remove her military posts from the area. For various reasons, the British did not comply. In fact, in early 1794, an order from Guy Carleton – at that time Lord Dorchester and Governor-in-Chief of the Canadas – authorized the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe, to construct Fort Miamis along the Maumee River, plainly situating it on land accorded by treaty to the United States. American Secretary of State Edmund Randolph complained to British Ambassador George Hammond that the intrusion was “an act, the hostility of which cannot be palliated.”<sup>3</sup>

The government of the United States had been struggling for control of the Northwest Territory since the end of the American Revolution. Although during the war the British had promised their Native American allies their own Indian buffer state, the Treaty of Paris (1783) did not even mention the Indians. As a result, both the United States and the Indians believed the western lands to be theirs. As early as 1783, the Indians of the Northwest Territory met in council and agreed to negotiate as one unit when dealing with the United States. The Iroquois of upper New York were instrumental in the early Confederacy. Other groups included the Shawnee, Miami, Wyandot, Ottawa, Delaware, and tribes generally referred to as the “Lake Indians” (indicating they lived around one or more of the Great Lakes). During the last 150 years, many of these tribes had been pushed from their homelands into what later became called the Northwest Territory. As the American settlers moved westward, the Indians' homelands were again threatened. Some groups, notably the Iroquois, Delaware, and Wyandot, hoped to contain the encroachment of current and future settlers by establishing a new boundary between them and Native Americans. Indian

groups that had not yet experienced westward displacement, such as the Shawnee and Miami, insisted on the Ohio River boundary established between the Indians and Great Britain at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. Despite the best intentions, the Confederacy began to unravel almost immediately when the Iroquois signed the Second Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1784 wherein they gave up lands north and west of the Ohio River to the United States. Two other “conquest” treaties, of Fort McIntosh (1785) and of Fort Finney (1786), continued to divide the Confederacy because only a few tribes, or more precisely, a few men from a few tribes, signed the treaties. Since the Confederacy as a whole had not consented to these treaties, many Indians felt that the entire Confederacy was not bound by them and thus continued to view the approach and settlement of Americans north and west of the Ohio River as a violation of the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix.<sup>4</sup>

Three conquest treaties between the U.S. government and various Indian groups (Fort Stanwix in 1784, Fort McIntosh in 1785, and Fort Finney in 1786) did little to diminish violence in the territory. Clashes between American settlers and Indians continued. In 1789, the United States again tried to establish a territorial division between the Indians and the settlers with the Treaty of Fort Harmar. This treaty failed to meet the requirements of the Indians and few, if any, official spokesmen for the Confederacy signed the documents. Violence continued, and in 1790, the first of three American military forays advanced into the Northwest Territory. Commonly called Harmar’s Defeat, the Indians twice ambushed the force under General Josiah Harmar before he regrouped and returned to Cincinnati. The devastating so-called St. Clair’s Defeat, wherein Territorial Governor General Arthur St. Clair led a second expedition, occurred the following year and was the worst defeat hitherto of an American army. Nearly half of the entire force was killed in a surprise attack on the morning of 4 November 1791. The third attempt to chastise the Indians for depredations would be led by General Anthony Wayne, who received his military command in 1792. This experienced Indian fighter trained his army, now called the American Legion, for two years as he slowly advanced northward through the Ohio country, building forts and stockpiling supplies.

The United States government felt that this military offensive against the Indians was necessary. Reports of violence on the frontier panicked western settlers and eastern investors. After two military defeats, the government was relying on Wayne. General Harmar wrote in late 1793 to Ebenezer Denny (an American officer in the First Regiment): “If General Wayne should be unsuccessful with this army (which I sincerely hope may not be the case), the frontier settlements on the Ohio must be left in a wretched exposed situation. The consequence would be dreadful indeed.”<sup>5</sup> Expansion of the new United States would surely be stalled by a third Indian victory.

In June 1794, the warriors of the Northwestern Indian Confederacy – primarily Shawnee and Miami, joined by some Ottawa, Pottawattamie, and Ojibwa – made an assault on the American Fort Recovery. Initially and successfully attacking a returning supply caravan, the young warriors exuberantly then decided to assault the fort itself. After a long day of fighting with no sign of weakening the fort, the frustrated Indians retreated.

In August 1794, Wayne and his men moved from Fort Greeneville to the Indian stronghold of the Glaize located at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee rivers. The inhabitants fled as the American army approached. Wasting no time, Wayne ordered the construction of Fort Defiance to replace the Indian village. On 18 August, Wayne moved his fighting force to the Roche de Bout on the banks of the Maumee and built a small storage fort called Deposit. From there, Wayne and his men advanced against the warriors of the Northwest Indian Confederacy.<sup>6</sup>

On the morning of 20 August 1794, Wayne and his American Legion fought a short (forty-five minutes) battle against a portion of the Confederacy's forces. The majority of the Indian warriors was not present at this Battle of Fallen Timbers, but had stayed behind in the village at Swan Creek because they did not anticipate battle on the rainy morning. As the defeated Indians evacuated the battlefield, the Legion fully believed they would regroup for another round. Captain John Cook wrote in his journal that "this affair . . . does not deserve the name of battle."<sup>7</sup>

As the Indians retreated, they approached the gates of Fort Miamis hoping for British support against Wayne's army. For weeks leading up to the battle, the British had seemingly promised protection for the Indians, but when the latter needed it, Campbell closed and locked the gates of the fort upon hearing the sounds of battle. Campbell thus denied the Indians refuge in Fort Miamis. Angered and betrayed, they failed to reorganize and resist the Americans; instead they retreated to their camp at Swan Creek. Jonathon Adler, a white who had previously been captured and raised by the Indians, reported that "it was an act the Indians never forgot."<sup>8</sup> It is certain that the Indians expected assistance from the British at Fort Miamis. Joseph Brant, the famous Mohawk leader, later chastised the British for building Fort Miamis "under pretence of giving refuge in case of necessity but when that time came the gates were shut against them as enemies."<sup>9</sup> John Anderson, a British merchant at the fort, recalled that the following day "the Indians returned much enraged against the [British] officers, [calling] them cowards, and in one instance spit in the face of a [lieutenant]."<sup>10</sup> Years later, the Shawnee war-chief Blue Jacket remembered that "when we could not withstand the army that came against us . . . the English told us 'I cannot let you in. You are painted too much, my children.' It was then we saw the British dealt treacherously



with us.”<sup>11</sup> This immediate recognition of betrayal persisted, and the Indians of the Confederacy would never fully trust the British again. How had they so disastrously miscalculated the situation?

Officials of the British Indian Department had indeed long encouraged and supported the Native Americans to resist the encroachment of the United States on lands north and west of the Ohio River. Shortly after the end of the American Revolution, British Major Arent DePeyster sent white wampum signifying peace to the Shawnee and Wyandot Indians. He told them not to “forget their promise to continue as firm as the oak and as deep as the waters, in the cause of the King of Great Britain.”<sup>12</sup> The Indians understood this relationship to mean that the British were likewise willing to aid and protect them against armed intrusion of the United States. The British again encouraged Indian resistance when Matthew Elliott, a British Indian agent, tried in 1785 to dissuade a group of Shawnee from attending the negotiation of the Treaty of Fort Finney. He asserted “that the Indians had better fight like men than give up their lands and starve like dogs.”<sup>13</sup> British agents often lived among the Indians and had family relations there. While this allowed them to have firsthand knowledge of the frontier situation, they were also often removed from the making of “official” British policy. Immediate local need and general British diplomacy were sometimes in conflict with each other, and these local agents sometimes aided their Indian friends nonetheless.

In 1790, Arthur St. Clair complained that British trader Alexander McKee, who was married to a Shawnee woman, was “distributing ammunition and stores [which] looks so like the support of the government that it is impossible they should view it in any other light.”<sup>14</sup> Isaac Freeman, an American spy, reported in 1792 that British traders such as McKee and James Girty delivered goods to the chiefs at the Glaize, and in return, the chiefs flew the British flag over their homes.<sup>15</sup> Officially, these supplies were to be used for hunting, but the volume of trade implied that they were also used in raids against the Americans.

Official British policy after 1783 suggested that war between Great Britain and the United States was to be avoided, but a British proxy war using the Native Americans was nevertheless in full swing. It was this attitude that made the Indians believe that Great Britain was in fact an ally and would aid them against the American army. In August 1792, Simcoe told McKee that it was “neither the Interest nor the Inclination of His Majesty’s Government to commence Offensive Hostilities against the United States.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, that same year McKee subsequently delivered 100,000 pieces of wampum to the polyglot Indian village at the Glaize and 80 percent of it was black, signifying hostility.<sup>17</sup> The Indians even received from Fort Miamis provisions for councils held

during this time. To the Indians, all signs pointed to British support, perhaps only with a wink and a nod; but the Indians of the Northwest relied on it.

Despite what appeared to many to be obvious overtures, however, some Indians did express disbelief that the British would in fact aid them if the Americans attacked. Mohawk leader Joseph Brant tried to understand the precise relationship between Great Britain, the United States, and the Native Americans. In 1792, he asked McKee, "if Great Britain wishes us to defend our country, why not tell us so in plain language. If the reverse, let it be mentioned, then we will know how to act, and be enabled to take such steps as will secure us and our posterity." Essentially, the Indians could only realistically defend their Ohio lands if the British guaranteed support for a war against the Americans. If Great Britain could not offer that, Brant implied that a treaty between the Indians and the United States might be necessary.<sup>18</sup>

In February 1794, Governor-in-Chief Carleton (or Lord Dorchester) announced that war between the United States and Great Britain was certain. When he even alluded to the development of an Indian state, the Native Americans latched onto this idea as a policy statement, especially since he had just returned to Canada from Britain during the previous year.<sup>19</sup> That same month, British official Joseph Chew wrote a private letter to Thomas Aston Coffin in Quebec complaining that some Indians there had access to a pamphlet stating that war was expected between the United States and Great Britain.<sup>20</sup> Two months later, Simcoe officially relayed that message to the Indians and British agents in the Ohio country.<sup>21</sup> An April 1794 report from Fort Detroit, a British outpost, mentioned that Simcoe and several troop companies under the command of Colonel England had gone to build an outpost along the Maumee River. Before long this Fort Miamis was completed at the foot of the Maumee Rapids and was clearly upon American soil. Additionally, the British fortified Turtle Island in the mouth of the Maumee River and added troops along the River Raisin, both sites also on American soil.<sup>22</sup> On 10 July 1794, Simcoe reported to McKee his belief that ongoing diplomatic negotiations to improve relations between Great Britain and the United States would be fruitless.<sup>23</sup> British belief in an impending war prompted an increase in their encouragement of the Indians to attack frontier settlements.

American beliefs about British complicity in frontier violence had been validated at the attack on Fort Recovery back in June 1794. In his correspondence to his superior, Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, McKee noted that although many British were present at the battle, they could not commit themselves. Had the British obviously "taken an active share in the contest [they would have] become at least auxiliaries in the war."<sup>24</sup> Other reports, however, show that British agents, such as Simon Girty and McKee, did indeed fight with the Indians at Fort Recovery, even though the British govern-

ment could give no official support to their actions.<sup>25</sup> The Indians, however, made no distinction between their British friends and the British government and saw such acts of friendship as government-sanctioned. In May 1794, McKee had even told Joseph Chew that only the absence of a formal declaration of war deterred him from advancing British troops to aid the Indians. Even after the fighting at Fort Recovery, the British increased the amount of supplies intended for the Indians, especially gunpowder sent to Fort Miamis, a gesture the Indians considered akin to a British-Indian alliance.<sup>26</sup>

When Wayne's army captured two Shawnee Indians in July 1794 and interrogated them about the British, they replied that some chiefs in council had refused to send warriors to battle because "they could not depend upon the British for effectual support; they were always setting the Indians on like dogs after game."<sup>27</sup> This information came in conjunction with the capture of two Pottawattamies that same month, who informed Wayne that Simcoe was sending messages to encourage the Indians to fight the Americans. They reported that messages sent from Simcoe "were as red as blood; all the wampum and feathers were painted red; the war pipes and hatchets were red, and even the tobacco was painted red." Contrary to the Shawnee's lack of confidence in the British, the Pottawattamie believed that Simcoe would supply 1500 men to support the Indians.<sup>28</sup> In council in May 1794, the Delaware chiefs had told the British, in a message delivered to McKee, to "be strong and bid your children [British agents and troops] make haste to our assistance as was promised by them. We have been constantly calling upon them all the Spring to collect here to oppose this Enemy but hitherto to no purpose."<sup>29</sup> These statements reveal that the British had encouraged the Indians to fight, but neglected to commit to outright formal assistance.

Even after the Battle of Fallen Timbers had routed Native American forces, some Indians still expected to get assistance at Fort Miamis. Although Great Britain had showed friendship towards the Indians and even supported them with words, weapons, and sometimes men in their opposition to American expansion, Campbell well knew that his force could not confront the Legion directly as it pushed the Native American warriors towards the fort. Admitting the Indians warriors into the protection of Fort Miamis would have given Wayne the pretext to attack the fort. This, in effect, would have started an Anglo-American war.

So Campbell had to rely on a confrontation by way of words in his first message. Wayne and his men longed for a clash with the country that, in his eyes as well as in the opinion of most Americans, had encouraged the Indians to resist and attack American settlement north of the Ohio River. Thus Wayne and his men took this opportunity to antagonize the British. Bad feelings between the two armies grew as the Americans crept within range of the British guns. The British soldiers ached to fire on

the Americans who mocked them. John Anderson, who was among the former, recalled that the American troops “came within musket Shott [sic] of the fort, at which time artillery officers had the slow & quick matches burning and the Cannon well loded [sic] and request[ed] permeation [sic] to fire but the Maj[o]r Positively refused.”<sup>30</sup>

After the initial exchange of notes, Major Campbell re-sharpened his quill:

Sir: Although your letter of yesterday's date fully authorizes me to any act of hostility against the army of the United States of America in this neighborhood, under your command, yet, still, anxious to prevent that dreadful decision which, perhaps, is not intended to be appealed to by either of our countries, I have forborne, for those two days past, to resent those insults you have offered to the British flag flying at this fort, by approaching it within pistol shot of my works, not only singly, but in numbers, with arms in hands.<sup>31</sup>

This reaction eventually won accolades from Simcoe and other British officials when the correspondence was forwarded and received. Campbell's stance, however, stemmed not only from the Americans' daring approaches to the fort, but also a report from an American deserter. Campbell had intelligence that Wayne's actual objective was Fort Miamis and that the American general had told his men “not to be uneasy about provisions, that there were plenty in the British garrison.”<sup>32</sup> Campbell again mentioned the possibility of a general war when his note continued:

Neither is it my wish to wage war with individuals; but, should you, after this, continue to approach my post in the threatening manner you are at this moment doing, my indispensable duty to my King and country, and the honor of my profession, will oblige me to have recourse to those measures, which thousands of either nation may hereafter have cause to regret, and which, I solemnly appeal to God, I have used my utmost endeavors to arrest.<sup>33</sup>

Wayne and Campbell stood toe to toe with their venom-filled pens. Each man despised the position of the other. In the middle of unsettled territory, both men contemplated facing the other in battle. The Americans resented British support of the Indians and the very presence of a British fort located on American soil. The presence of Fort Miamis symbolized aid to the Indian Confederacy of the Northwest, the very Native Americans that the United States government was attempting to dominate and restrain.

Although Wayne had been given orders to subdue and negotiate with the Indians, international relations were the purview of the diplomats of both governments. In fact, negotiations between the United States and Great Britain that would result in Jay's Treaty

were ongoing at that time. Both Wayne and Campbell understood the possible diplomatic consequences if violence between the two nations erupted on the American frontier.

After consideration of Campbell's second note, Wayne opted to reply only to the first, thus changing the focus of the debate:

In your letter of 21<sup>st</sup> instant, you declare "I have no hesitation, on my part, to say, that I know of no war existing between Great Britain and America."

I, on my part, declare the same and that the only cause I have to entertain a contrary idea at present, is the hostile act you are now in commission of, i.e. by recently taking post far within the well known and acknowledged limits of the United States. This, sir, appears to be an act of the highest aggression, and destructive to the peace and interest of the Union. Hence, it becomes my duty to desire, and I do hereby desire and demand, in the name of the President of the United States, that you immediately desist from any further act of hostility or aggression, by forbearing to fortify, and by withdrawing the troops, artillery, and stores, under your orders and direction, forthwith, and removing to the nearest post occupied by his Britannic majesty's troops at the peace of 1783 and which you will be permitted to do unmolested by the troops under my command.<sup>34</sup>

By insisting that Campbell remove his troops from Fort Miamis, Wayne could essentially win the battle of ink and accomplish his desire without resorting to physical violence. Wayne asserted that Fort Miamis was an illegal British fort, built after the completion of the Treaty of Paris on American soil, and he thus demanded that Campbell vacate it.

In reply, Campbell noted:

I have at this moment the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, in answer to which I have only to say, being placed here in the command of the British post, and acting in military capacity only, I cannot enter into discussion, either on the right or impropriety of my occupying my present position. Those are matters that I conceive will be best left to the ambassadors of our different nations.<sup>35</sup>

Campbell skirted the question of legality ostensibly because diplomatic negotiations were outside of his purview. In fact, as he claimed, he was not permitted to evacuate the fort without orders from his superiors. With no orders to move, Campbell intended

to stay unless forcibly removed by the American army. Therefore he simply could not comply with Wayne's request. He continued:

Having said this much, permit me to inform you, that I certainly will not abandon this post at the summons of any power whatever, until I receive orders to that purpose from those I have the honor to serve under, or the fortune of war should oblige me.

I must still adhere, sir, to the purport of my letter this morning, to desire that your army, or individuals belonging to it, will not approach within reach of my cannon, without expecting the consequences attending it.<sup>36</sup>

The "consequences" that Campbell proclaimed would doubtlessly have been cannon shots fired at Wayne's men and thus the possible outbreak of war. He continued:

Although I have said, in the former part of my letter, that my situation here is totally military, yet, let me add, sir, that I am much deceived, if his Majesty, the King of Great Britain, had not a post on this river, at and prior to the period you mention.<sup>37</sup>

In effect, Campbell ended his letter denying Wayne's territorial claim altogether. The fort, Campbell asserted, had been built on the site of a previous post, one that existed before the American Revolution. While it is not generally believed that a post existed on this site before 1794, Campbell may have been confused because previously other British forts had been located in the vicinity.<sup>38</sup> At best, however, such a circumstance would hardly justify the recent construction of Fort Miamis in blatant disregard of the national boundaries set up in the Treaty of Paris.

At this point, Campbell and Wayne had come to an impasse. Each side was irked by the other, but each was restrained by diplomacy. Wayne reported that this last letter was immediately set on fire. The Legion then commenced burning the fields and land around the fort, "even under the muzzles of the guns." Wayne further observed that if Campbell had carried out his threats "he would have experienced a storm[ing]" by the American Legion.<sup>39</sup> Mutual restraint saved the day. The tense situation on the banks of the Maumee in August 1794 diffused as Wayne continued to destroy the Indian's crops along the river and moved away from Fort Miamis.

General Anthony Wayne and Major William Campbell faced each other with animosity and perhaps hatred along the banks of the Maumee River. Each man led an armed force willing, able, and eager to fight the other. Hostility flowed from their pens as they exchanged correspondence. In the end, however, both men recognized

that they were not duly appointed diplomats and – irrespective of the mutual antipathy – their countries were officially at peace. Neither wanted to be accountable for the outbreak of an Anglo-American war in the wilds of the American frontier.<sup>40</sup>

## NOTES

1. *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* (reprint Buffalo: W.S. Hein, 1998), 1:493; hereafter ASPIA.
2. Ibid.
3. Ernest A. Cruikshank, ed., *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1923–1931), 2:239.
4. This summary can be found in George W. Knepper, *Ohio and Its People* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989), 51–54; Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian Wars: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790–1795* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 23–88; and Randolph Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indians Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1940; reprint, Baker and Taylor International, 1989), 283–324.
5. Ebenezer Denny, *Military Journal of Ebenezer Denny: An Officer in the Revolutionary and Indian Wars with an Introductory Memoir* (J. C. Lippincott & Co: Philadelphia, 1859; reprint, Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution Series, Arno Press, 1971), 185–86.
6. See Sword, 272–98; Knepper, 73–81; and Downes, 324–38.
7. John A. Cook, “Captain John Cook’s Journal,” *American Historical Record* 2 (1973): 316, quoted in Sword, 306.
8. Henry Clay Alder, *A History of Jonathon Alder: His Captivity and Life with the Indians*, ed. Larry L. Nelson (Akron: University of Akron Press, 2002), 115.
9. Sword, 306; William L. Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant* (New York: A. V. Black, 1866; reprint, New York: Kraus, 1969), 2:390. Brant (1743–1807), a respected Mohawk leader, led the Iroquois in many negotiations – within the Indian confederacy and with Great Britain and the United States. He was the brother of Molly Brant, the “wife” of British Indian Agent William Johnson. As a result of this connection, Brant had learned English, traveled to Great Britain, and fought in the American Revolution as a British officer.
10. John Anderson, *A Short History of the life of John Anderson*, transcribed by Richard C. Knopf from Michigan Historical Collections (Columbus, Ohio: The Anthony Wayne Parkway Board, 1956), 6–7.
11. Quoted in Sword, 179.
12. Quoted in Isabelle Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant: Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 375. The use of wampum – tiny beads originally made out of shells – was a communication device for many Native Americans. Strung together as belts, often depicting pictures, they relayed information, recognized treaties, or called tribes to war. Black wampum depicted war or hostility, white wampum represented peaceful issues.
13. William Henry Smith, ed., *The St. Clair’s Papers: The Life and Public Service of Arthur St. Clair: Soldier of the Revolutionary War, President of Continental Congress, and Governor of the North-Western Territory* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 2:11n.
14. Ibid, 2:194.

15. Larry L. Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them: Alexander McKee and British-Indian affairs along the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754–1799* (Kent Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1999), 158.
16. Cruikshank, 1:207–209.
17. Reginald Horsman, *Matthew Elliott: British Indian Agent* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), 96.
18. *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (Lansing: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 1874–1915), 24:417; hereafter MPHC.
19. Kelsay, 507.
20. MPHC 20:331–32.
21. Nelson, 170–71.
22. *Ibid.*, 167.
23. Downes, 326.
24. Cruikshank, 5:97.
25. Horseman, 96.
26. Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies: British Indian Policy in the Defense of Canada, 1774–1815* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992), 82.
27. ASPIA, 1:489–90.
28. *Ibid.*, 1:489.
29. MPHC 20: 354–55.
30. Anderson, 4–5.
31. ASPIA 1:493.
32. Cruikshank, 3:14.
33. ASPIA 1:493.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, 1:493–94.
36. *Ibid.*, 1:494.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Research at the Toledo/Lucas County Area Metro Parks, the current owners of the site, may lead to more conclusive information. Although there are documents describing a small fort along the Maumee Rapids, there is currently no indication that the site is the same.
39. ASPIA 1:494.
40. In the wake of Jay's Treaty, which was signed in November 1794, Fort Miamis was probably evacuated by the British in 1796.



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## **“Just Plain Hard Work”: Shelby Cox Plemmons’ Life on a South Carolina Tobacco Farm**

Matthew Roberts

Women were crucial to tobacco production. . . . They weeded plant beds, chopped weeds in the fields, wormed, topped, and suckered tobacco plants, and worked at the scaffold to hand, string, and pass sticks of tobacco into the barn. They also handled their own household duties, cared for their families, and cooked for a large crew of workers.<sup>1</sup>

Shelby Cox Plemmons was born in the years just before the Second World War. She grew up in a typical southern white farm family in a small town that could have been any small town in the rural South. Cox’s father was a tobacco farmer. Southern tobacco farmers in the middle of the twentieth-century had to endure a yearlong process of intensive labor to produce a crop to sell.<sup>2</sup> Tobacco farming was largely unmechanized and required nearly all the work to be done by hand.<sup>3</sup> By necessity, families were large, and they relied on every family member’s labor to keep costs down.<sup>4</sup> It was a world of contradiction where blacks and whites worked together out of mutual need but remained segregated in schools and in town. It was a male-dominated culture where women were relegated to work and behavior was defined by strict gender roles.<sup>5</sup>

This paper draws on an extensive interview with Shelby and highlights the important role of women in agricultural production. Farm women in the middle of the twentieth-century, like Shelby and her mother, received little credit for the crucial tasks they were responsible for on the farm. All the tasks typically identified with housework were the responsibility of farm women. Throughout the growing season, women were required to work in the fields, doubling up their responsibilities. Not only did the patriarchal society make women conform to certain jobs, it also dictated how they had to conduct themselves in public and what liberties they could enjoy. The study of one farm woman’s experiences and memories can help acknowledge the contributions of the many women that toiled in the shadow of their husbands and brothers on rural farms across the South. Advances in technology and changes in government programs during the twentieth century brought about the demise of many family farms. Their loss could mean that without oral histories, like Shelby’s, women’s contributions to farm labor could be forgotten by future generations. This paper expands the growing body of social history that examines the roles of women and twentieth-century farm labor in the South.

Shelby grew up on a tobacco farm in Horry County, South Carolina, about a mile outside Loris.<sup>6</sup> She was part of a large family and one of ten children.<sup>7</sup> It was not unusual for families to be as large as hers. A 1920s study showed that farm families averaged 5.5 children.<sup>8</sup> As in most rural families, she and her siblings learned to work when they were young. Shelby recalled that “if you could walk, you could work.”<sup>9</sup> If the children were too young to work in the fields, they would help prepare the meals by doing tasks like shelling beans or peas.<sup>10</sup> The labor was so intense that no matter how successful a tobacco farmer might become, the children always worked on the farm.<sup>11</sup>

The process for cultivating a crop of tobacco began in January with the sowing of the seed. The sowing was done by hand on the Cox farm until the late 1950s, when Shelby’s family began to mechanize the process by purchasing machines and tractors.<sup>12</sup> In waiting to mechanize, they were fairly typical - most tobacco farmers across the South relied on hand labor until the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> When Shelby was older, the family began using weed-killing chemicals, but before that, the entire family would help weed the crop throughout the growing season.<sup>14</sup> The summer was the busiest time on the farm, for that was when the tobacco harvesting and curing took place.<sup>15</sup> The tobacco was so important that the family would store it inside the house after it was harvested and cured. Her mother “would take down the beds . . . and stand all the bed frames outside.”<sup>16</sup> “We’d just put the mattresses down anywhere we could find . . . and they’d put the tobacco in the house.”<sup>17</sup> All summer, the family would sleep on pallettes in the long hall down the center of the house. Later, Shelby’s father built a pack house to store both their tobacco and the tenants’ tobacco.<sup>18</sup> Curing the tobacco also required everyone to help out. Tobacco would be cured in barns that were heated by flues.<sup>19</sup> A large wood fire in a brick fireplace was used to sustain the heat.<sup>20</sup> It would require three or four days of constant work to cure the tobacco. During that time, family members would take turns staying up all night maintaining the fire. It was also a time when the family and the tenants would “roast a chicken or something else . . . [and] . . . have them a little party.”<sup>21</sup> In autumn, the work would turn to creating hands of tobacco and grading it, “We’d separate the leaves into piles and we’d have about three of four different grades.”<sup>22</sup> After grading, the tobacco was bundled together onto sticks and taken to the warehouse to be sold.<sup>23</sup> It required over 257 hours of work to cultivate one acre of tobacco crop.<sup>24</sup> Tobacco was “your livelihood” and the most important thing in a farmer’s life.<sup>25</sup>

Land owners like Shelby’s father would also use tenant farmers to do some of the work. Tenants were supplied with a home and a plot of land and expected to work the land and then split the crop with the land owner at the end of the season.<sup>26</sup> Shelby’s family had about four or five tenant families who lived on the family land,

helped with the tobacco production, and shared the profit.<sup>27</sup> Shelby recalls that tenants on the Cox farm enjoyed working for her father, which wasn't always the case on neighboring farms. Shelby's father had a reputation among the locals as being both kind and an excellent farmer. Some of the tenants were African American, and they worked side by side with the white families.<sup>28</sup> This was not unusual for the time, for when conditions such as working on a farm dictated, racial differences were often ignored.<sup>29</sup> Historian Pete Daniel writes that the process of "barning tobacco brought family, neighbors, owners, tenants, sharecroppers, black, white, young, old, men and women together. They shared gossip, news, sweat, fatigue, Pepsi-Colas, Moon Pies, and meals."<sup>30</sup> It was much the same on the Cox family farm, but aside from work, Shelby and her family had little contact with African Americans. She attended segregated schools, and although her parents stressed treating African Americans with respect, the family avoided the areas of town where they lived and did not "mingle with them."<sup>31</sup> Later in life, Shelby and her husband allowed an African American friend of their oldest son to live with them for close to a year, even though a few people in the community privately expressed disapproval. Her willingness to open up her home despite criticism is a reflection of the values her parents taught her as the family worked side by side with African Americans, "my Dad didn't treat [blacks] any different" and "we were taught to be respectful."<sup>32</sup>

Though tobacco was the most important crop, it was not the only one that Shelby and her family grew. A 1926 United States Department of Agriculture study showed that southern farm families grew 66 percent of their own food, and Shelby's family was no different.<sup>33</sup> They grew sweet potatoes and "banked them" for use all winter.<sup>34</sup> In the summer months, they kept a garden, where they cultivated "a lot of collards, cabbage, and turnip greens" and stored them for use all year.<sup>35</sup> On the farm they also raised chickens, pigs, and cattle. Food was plentiful, if not a little dull. Shelby remembers it as a big treat when her father would bring home bologna, hot dogs, or ice cream.<sup>36</sup>

The work done in the fields was not the only labor performed on the farm. Tasks typically identified with housework like cooking and cleaning were the responsibility of farm women.<sup>37</sup> Shelby, her two sisters, and her mother were responsible for doing all the cooking and cleaning.<sup>38</sup> Shelby learned to cook at an early age and also had to do the ironing and sweep the yard, which was kept free of grass all summer.<sup>39</sup> Only one of her seven brothers helped with washing clothes, and he was embarrassed enough by that work to hide when his girlfriend came to see him.<sup>40</sup> Like many rural families who lacked running water, Shelby's mother would wake before everyone else to prepare breakfast on a wood stove. On Sunday she would stay home from church services so

she could cook the family dinner.<sup>41</sup> Dinners were mid-day meals, and Shelby's mother would cook for all the people who worked on the farm because "if you worked helping Daddy, you ate dinner with us."<sup>42</sup> It wasn't until Shelby was a teenager that her father remodeled the house and added a bathroom and gas stove, making household tasks easier.<sup>43</sup> In the evenings, the girls were also required to help with tasks associated with field work like preparing tobacco for shipment to the warehouse or shelling corn for seed.<sup>44</sup> It meant not only that they had to attend school or work during the day in the household, but also that they were required to work in the evening too, doubling up their responsibilities. During the sowing or weeding of the crop, the girls might also be required to work in the fields as well.

Throughout her childhood, Shelby was assigned jobs based on her gender. When the girls were at home helping with the seed corn, the boys "dressed up and went to town" for a night out.<sup>45</sup> During the summer months when the girls would return from harvesting, they would be required to help their mother prepare the meal, while the boys were allowed to "lay down on the porch and rest awhile."<sup>46</sup> Shelby remembers being told that the boys were able to rest because "they were boys and they had harder work to do than girls."<sup>47</sup> This favoritism toward males included Shelby and her sisters being told when they were young that girls wouldn't be allowed to inherit a share of the family farm because they might "marry some ole scalawag" who would snatch away the land.<sup>48</sup> Sometimes the adults would belittle the work of the girls. Once, after cleaning some fish for the family, Shelby and her sister overheard her aunt telling someone that the fish were "so clean" that "them boys must have cleaned them."<sup>49</sup>

Not only did the patriarchal society make her perform certain jobs, it dictated her behavior by restricting her choice of clothing and even who could drive an automobile. Until Shelby's youngest sister was older, their father did not allow the girls to wear shorts. She remembers as a teenager buying a pretty pair of Bermuda shorts while in town by herself. Knowing that her father would have the final decision on the appropriateness of the new shorts, she put them on and tried to sneak home on a route she hoped he wouldn't be traveling that day. Unfortunately, her father came that way and caught Shelby in the new bermuda shorts. She had to ride home sitting next to him, and although he surprised her by not objecting to the new shorts then, she was told later to return them. Driving, too, was something that only her father and brothers did. Shelby and her sisters always walked to town or were driven by their father. Shelby did not learn how to drive until 1972, after her third child was born, and she could never recall when, as a child, she had ever seen a woman driving.<sup>50</sup>

Amidst all the work, the children still had "a lot of time to play," not with "bought toys" but with items found around the farm like tin cans and blocks of wood.<sup>51</sup> When

the weather was good, ball games were popular pasttimes for both the older and younger children. Rainy days were often spent together playing games like marbles on the huge wrap-around porch of the family home. During the growing season, the children both worked and played outside, something Shelby believes helped make them healthier than today's young people. When the weather didn't allow them to work or play outdoors, the family would gather in the "fire room" and listen to radio programs like the Lone Ranger and the Squeaking Door.<sup>52</sup> People also gathered together to watch television, but it was a controversial new technology. When television first came to the area, ministers labeled it the "devil's horns" after the antenna that were raised on farmhouse roofs.<sup>53</sup> Watching television was considered "very sinful;" it was condemned by local stump preachers, and it was openly discouraged by people in the community.<sup>54</sup> Slowly people gave in to progress, and televisions became common. Shelby remembers that her father had no problem with television, but he still waited until after she left for college in the mid-1950s before getting one for the family.

Faith was an important influence in the lives of the local farmers, and they gathered together to worship when not working in the fields. Shelby's father would load up his pick-up truck on Sunday mornings and then again that evening with anyone that wanted to go to church. "Hell and damnation" was the frequent message preached from the pulpit,<sup>55</sup> but church gatherings could also mean community parties with cake, ice cream, and children's games. Summertime brought tent meetings with lots "of shoutin," as did meetings at the homes of sick church members.<sup>56</sup> Faith and community were central to the way of life on a tobacco farm and reinforced the gender roles of men and women. In Shelby's family, as previously mentioned, her mother was usually the only member to miss morning services, not because she didn't want to attend, but because she had to prepare the Sunday dinner.<sup>57</sup>

After graduating from high school in 1956, Shelby left the farm to attend Anderson Junior College.<sup>58</sup> Although she continued to return home to visit, she subsequently moved to Spartanburg, where she has lived for fifty years.<sup>59</sup> After her father died, she and her sisters were given an acre of land apiece, and the rest was passed down to her brothers. Eventually, however, the farm became a victim of the government's declining tobacco allotment program - which, for decades, had provided an incentive to farmers to reduce production - and stopped producing tobacco.<sup>60</sup>

For years, her father and then her brothers had relied on the government program that limited the amount of tobacco they could sell, but guaranteed a price for their price for their allotment. Each year, the government would measure their tobacco fields, would require them to cut down any excess acreage, and would guarantee a minimum price for what remained. This allowed a small farm to survive while producing a small

crop. When bulk curers became available and larger farms mechanized, the small producer began to be squeezed out of the market.<sup>61</sup> The government made the situation worse by changing the allotment calculation from acres produced to poundage, making it difficult for farmers to predict what they would receive from the government.<sup>62</sup> By 1979, 61 percent of all tobacco growers were using bulk curers rather than the old barn cured method.<sup>63</sup> Innovations like the mechanical harvester were affordable only by large-scale farms and left smaller farms unable to compete with the increased output.<sup>64</sup> Small farms, confronted with these changes to the allotment and the rising costs of new technology, were forced to close.<sup>65</sup> In Shelby's family, only one brother carried on the farming tradition, but faced with the unstable allotment and his approaching retirement, he, too, left farming.<sup>66</sup> Long before that, most of the brothers had left the farm either to get local jobs or to open their own businesses.<sup>67</sup> One brother opened a local gas station and another opened a restaurant. It was common for local industries to absorb workers from farms as they closed, and Horry County was no different.<sup>68</sup> Because her brothers and sisters were hired locally, the family has been able to remain in the area.<sup>69</sup> The land has now been divided up among the grandchildren and is covered over with their homes. Today, it is affectionally known to locals as "Cox Town."<sup>70</sup> The Cox farm became yet another small-town farm to cease production because of declining profits, competition from large growers, and failed government programs. In an ironic twist, most of the sons who inherited the land had daughters who now own the family land. It has yet to fall into the hands of a "scalawag."<sup>71</sup>

Though the Cox family farm is gone, as such, a microcosm of it exists nestled among the legions of growing hotels and restaurants on the west side of Spartanburg, South Carolina. Just off of South Blackstock Road, Shelby and her husband have operated a nursery since 1967.<sup>72</sup> Before moving out into the "country" and beginning this now-thriving family business, called Plemmons Westview Greenhouses, she and her husband lived in downtown Spartanburg, where she worked for several years as a drugstore clerk for twenty-two dollars.<sup>73</sup> What began as just one small greenhouse and a couple of tomato beds has evolved into a business with more than a half-dozen greenhouses on two different pieces of property. Throughout the year, the family sells all types of annuals including pansies, impatiens, and petunias. The business is well known locally for its hanging baskets, flowering cabbage, and vegetable plants.<sup>74</sup> Today, her youngest son, Chuck, works with them, operating his own business on the same location. Like his parents, he has become known in the area for his well-grown perennials and hostas.<sup>75</sup> During the busier times of the year, other family members are always there helping out around the greenhouses.<sup>76</sup> If you stop in just about any time of year you will find Shelby hard at work. She cooks a large dinner almost every day, and she

welcomes to her table anyone who works there or just happens to be visiting. When she isn't running the household, you'll find her working in one of the greenhouses preparing the next crop of flowers, or on a busy day she might even be under the big tree helping customers. Like her mother and the other wives of tobacco farmers she knew growing up, she gets little credit for the success of the nursery business. To the public and even to reporters who have written features on the greenhouses for the local newspaper, it appears that her husband is the primary reason for their success. Those who take a closer look, however, can see that it is she who is "the real horticulturist" and the heart of the family.<sup>77</sup> Shelby may have left the farm, but she brought the work ethic with her and has passed it on to her children and grandchildren. She is happiest when she is working the way she was taught to work long ago on the tobacco farm.

"My mother told me some years before she died, "Shelby you work too hard." I said, "Mama it's all your fault," and she looked at me real funny, and she said "Why is it my fault?" I said "that is the way you and Dad taught us."<sup>78</sup>

## NOTES

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## Undertakers of the Weimar Republic? The Nazification of Munich Professors, 1918–1933

Stefan W. Wiecek

The ease with which Adolf Hitler discarded the essential elements of Germany's first democracy, the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), in the years following his rise to power in 1933 has often confounded historians who expected acts of resolute resistance from the educated German elite against Hitler's authoritarian ambitions. Yet even the most educated members of German society, the university professors, kept quiet and did not seem to mind the end of the liberal Weimar order. As early as 1948, historians had questioned the argument that Hitler alone was to blame for Weimar's demise and had wondered whether the lack of elite support had doomed the first German democratic experiment from the start. Some scholars have subsequently argued that the German professors' active rejection of the Weimar Republic made them partly responsible for both the fall of the first German democracy and the rise of Hitler in 1933.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the majority of German professors rushed to offer Hitler their unsolicited support soon after he became chancellor in January 1933 seems to confirm this thesis. To these historians, this public show of support proves that German academia had become infected with Nazi ideology long before the fall of the Weimar Republic. It was unsurprising, they noted, that German professors sided with Hitler, for this public act simply made official their allegedly long-held personal beliefs.<sup>2</sup> This provocative argument, however, disregards the great variety of responses by German professors towards Nazism and obscures the counter-assertion, namely, that German academia was not committed to Nazi ideology before 1933. This study proposes to look at the complex responses of Munich professors to Nazism throughout the Weimar Republic. Rather than being "closet-Nazis" all along, the large majority of Munich professors subscribed to their own brand of nationalist conservative ideology that was in many ways as remote from democracy as it was from Nazism. To prove this thesis, let us first review the political convictions among German academics in general and then turn to the specific case of Munich University.

Three groups of then-contemporary German scholars can be discerned when one gauges their views regarding the Weimar Republic: the "modernist" minority of Weimar supporters, the "orthodox majority" of Weimar skeptics, and the extreme German nationalists, who regarded democracy as a foreign concept. The "modernist" liberal and socialist professors who embraced the new democratic system remained a

relatively small group of social outsiders throughout the entire Weimar era, and even their support for the new republic was often based on reason rather than on emotional affirmation.<sup>3</sup> By the early 1930s, their already small numbers had dwindled to almost nothing because the growing evidence of Weimar's many deficiencies had become so glaringly obvious that even democrats were loath to defend the republic openly. In addition, many pro-Weimar educators grew fearful of becoming the target of the increasingly radicalized student body "that became at first a more and more nationalist-*völkisch*, and then, even more vehemently, a National Socialist force and avant-garde that put tremendous pressure onto the university."<sup>4</sup>

On the other side of the political spectrum from the "modernists" was the small, but vocal group of extreme German nationalists who did not accept the German defeat in the Great War and fiercely opposed the Weimar Republic. They regarded democracy not as a genuine German concept, but as an alien notion that had been imposed upon the defeated nation by the Entente powers to keep Germany weak and submissive. Making matters worse, the new republic seemed to them a socialist experiment because the first president, Friedrich Ebert, was a Social Democrat.<sup>5</sup> Adding to the nationalist professors' alienation from the new Weimar state were the political upheavals of the immediate post-war period, such as Weimar's acceptance of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the Spartacist uprising, and the Kapp Putsch. To the professors, these episodes revealed the republic's inherent weakness and inability to assert its authority in both the domestic and international arenas. The nationalist professors' goal was to restore the old monarchical system or at least to establish a conservative authoritarian state. They were, therefore, very much relieved when President Ebert died in 1925 and was replaced by the former Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, a nationalist-conservative figure and symbol of the old imperial order.<sup>6</sup>

The orthodox majority of professors, which in this case was akin to a silent majority, considered themselves German patriots; their political preferences ranged from "liberal-conservative to German nationalist."<sup>7</sup> Unlike their extreme nationalist colleagues, they did not try to fight or to destroy the Weimar system. Historian Helmut Heiber notes that while they neither loved nor hated the Weimar Republic, "they observed political events with the coolest skepticism."<sup>8</sup> Only a few of them joined political parties, and they excused their obvious lack of enthusiasm for the new democratic order by pointing out that they merely adhered to the Humboldtian ideal of an un-political scholarly profession.<sup>9</sup>

Yet contrary to their professed "un-political" pretensions, the mindset of the majority of the educational elite was clearly anti-democratic, anti-socialist, and often also anti-Semitic – and thereby clearly opposed to the very foundations of the Weimar

Republic.<sup>10</sup> To Heiber, there was little difference between the conservative majority and the extreme German nationalists:

The great majority of the “party of party-less,” the allegedly “un-political” [professors], had a political outlook that was very similar to that of their vociferous German nationalist colleagues – the only difference was [that the “moderates” were] more reserved, rather passive, and were politically perhaps half-a-step closer to the middle.<sup>11</sup>

It would be wrong to assume, however, that German professors never developed a positive relationship with the republic because of their perceptions of its actual or supposed shortcomings. Instead, one could argue that the anti-democratic mindset of the majority of professors is to blame. Both the more moderate conservative and the extreme nationalist scholars remained wedded to the bygone era and were unable to overcome the downfall of the German Empire. Or, as Helmut Böhm argues,

The majority of university teachers could not and would not establish a positive relationship with the Weimar state, because a backward looking mentality prevailed, which combined the nostalgic memory of the old Imperial Germany with the wish for a national resurgence, a restoration of former greatness.<sup>12</sup>

The attitudes of Munich professors towards Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic reflected in many ways the mindset in German academia as a whole. There, too, the nationalistic spirit and the rejection of any kind of compromise peace prevailed throughout the First World War. Any kind of dissent was unacceptable and was seen as treason. For example, when Munich Professor Wilhelm Foerster published a pacifist newspaper article in 1916 that criticized the conduct of the war and the imperial government, his Munich colleagues distanced themselves from him and student unrest broke out.<sup>13</sup>

Most Munich university faculty stood firmly behind the German war effort and the imperial government. The historian Karl Alexander von Müller (1882–1964) was one of the nationalist professors who, in 1917, joined the first German right-wing mass party, the *Vaterlandspartei* (Fatherland Party),<sup>14</sup> which was strongly anti-socialist, supported annexationist war aims, and firmly rejected the proposed peace initiative of the Reichstag majority of 1917.<sup>15</sup> At the helm of the *Vaterlandspartei* stood right-wing figures such as Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, journalist Wolfgang Kapp, and the businessman Alfred Hugenberg. Given the nationalistic spirit of the *Vaterlandspartei*, it comes as no surprise that Anton Drexler, later the founder of the German Workers’ Party (*Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or DAP), the precursor of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party,

(*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or NSDAP or Nazis), was another Munich resident who joined the *Vaterlandspartei* in the same year as von Müller.<sup>16</sup>

While the *Vaterlandspartei* dissolved itself after the German defeat in 1918, its nationalistic spirit lived on in the minds of many former members. These nationalists grew very worried by the various coup attempts and political assassinations that occurred in the early years of the Weimar Republic. The political insecurity of the post-war period was even more pronounced in Munich than it was in Berlin. To the overwhelming applause of the Munich conservative establishment, the right-wing extremist Count Anton von Arco-Valley assassinated the Independent Socialist Bavarian Minister President Kurt Eisner on 2 February 1919 as the latter was about to resign office.<sup>17</sup> Two months after Eisner's death, a Bolshevik coup established the Munich *Räterepublik* or Bavarian Soviet Republic. The conservative middle-class in Munich was in shock, and many prominent members of the political Right left the city in a hurry. Richard Willstätter, a Munich chemistry professor and Nobel Prize winner of 1915, described the reaction of Munich professors to the coup in his memoirs:

The university was in a panic. Some young troublemakers, male and female students, took the keys to the archives from the department chairs. They threatened the university and accused them of having lost touch with the *Zeitgeist* and the demands of the street. Some of my colleagues were personally threatened. Some of the professors who stood politically on the right had hastily fled the city.<sup>18</sup>

The professors' fear that the Communists would try to destroy the traditional structures of Munich University proved warranted. During its short lifespan, the leaders of the Soviet Republic worked on an action program to "revolutionize the university" and transform it into a "people's university." They dispersed the university senate, took the rector hostage, and even instituted a two week experiment of a "proletarian transition-university."<sup>19</sup>

The radical transformation did not last long, however, because on 1 May 1919 the *Räterepublik* was bloodily crushed by right-wing Free Corps under General Franz Ritter von Epp.<sup>20</sup> The conservative establishment in Munich, including most professors, breathed a sigh of relief at the apparent end of the Communist threat. Not surprisingly, the "Red Scare" caused by the short-lived *Räterepublik* further increased the anti-socialism of the Munich middle-class and its willingness to accept violent measures to suppress any Communist threat in the future. As many of the leading figures of the *Räterepublik* had been of Jewish heritage, Munich was swept by a wave of anti-Semitism that focused specifically on the negative image of the "Jewish Bolshevik."<sup>21</sup> In the following years, Munich became

the focal point of intense anti-Semitic agitation and of the struggle against Communism. Munich seemed therefore predestined to become the starting point for Adolf Hitler's political career, and Munich University had the doubtful honor of launching it.

As Bolshevik agitation continued in 1919 among Bavarian soldiers waiting for their demobilization, the Press and Propaganda Section of the *Reichswehr* established in Bavaria a subordinate propaganda unit to counter the spread of Communist ideology. Historian Ian Kershaw states that among the *Reichswehr* leadership, the education of the troops in a "correct" anti-Bolshevik, nationalist fashion was rapidly regarded as priority, and "speaker-courses" were devised in order to train "suitable personalities from the troops," who would remain for some considerable time in the army and function as "*Propagandaleute*" (propaganda agents) with qualities of persuasion capable of negating subversive ideas.<sup>22</sup> General Staff officer Captain Karl Mayr, the commander of this subordinate *Reichswehr* propaganda unit, handpicked his former schoolmate Professor Karl Alexander von Müller in June 1919 as one of the Munich University instructors who should teach the so-called "*Aufklärungskurse*," or political education courses, for Mayr's propaganda unit.<sup>23</sup>

One of the propaganda soldiers sitting in on Professor von Müller's course on "*Die politische Geschichte des Krieges*" ("The Political History of the [Great] War) was Private Adolf Hitler, who dazzled his instructor with his exceptional oratorical talent.<sup>24</sup> After von Müller pointed out Hitler's "natural rhetorical talent" to Mayr,<sup>25</sup> the captain started assigning important propaganda tasks to the young private and thereby began Hitler's political career. "He had advanced from being a course participant and member of the propaganda unit to Mayr's personal political assistant,"<sup>26</sup> observed German historian Ernst Deuerlein. In November 1919, Mayr sent Hitler as an army *V-Mann* (*Vertrauens-Mann* or informer) to Anton Drexler's newly formed DAP. Hitler joined the party while he was still a member of the *Reichswehr* and soon became its most coveted public speaker. He spoke on numerous occasions about the devastating political and economic effects of the Versailles Treaty, and he left no doubt that he regarded the Jews as the reason for Germany's defeat in the war and her continuing weakness.<sup>27</sup>

Hitler's anti-Semitism and political outlook were, of course, not formed by sitting in on Professor von Müller's lecture course in June 1919, but it can be assumed that many of his ideas were confirmed by the prestigious historian, who thereby gave them his seal of approval.<sup>28</sup> Through Professor von Müller, Munich University had unknowingly participated in the creation of Hitler the politician.<sup>29</sup>

Given his own conservative nationalist background and his early fascination with Hitler, it is not surprising that von Müller developed sympathies for the Nazi movement early in the Weimar years. What is surprising, however, is that very few of

his colleagues shared his affinity for Nazism.<sup>30</sup> One historian, Helmut Böhm, notes that Nazi ideology remained essentially “foreign” (“*fremd*”) to the majority of Munich professors, even though some could discern certain “positive aspects” (“*positive Aspekte*”).<sup>31</sup> It is telling that none of the tenured professors at Munich University joined the Nazi Party before 1933 – and this included von Müller as well.<sup>32</sup> While some of the non-tenured faculty members, such as lecturers and assistant professors, joined the Party, even they chose to avoid displaying their political sympathies openly.<sup>33</sup>

While most Munich professors were not members of any political party, the majority stood politically close to one of the three conservative groups: the *Bayerische Volkspartei* or Bavarian People’s Party (BVP), the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* or German Nationalist People’s Party (DNVP), and the *Deutsche Volkspartei* or German People’s Party (DVP).<sup>34</sup> The fact that the conservative BVP dominated Bavarian politics insulated Munich University to a certain degree from the widely disdained federal government in Berlin. As a result, the political attitude of Munich professors was less hostile to democracy than that of their colleagues at other German universities. According to Böhm, Munich University was unique in that “the nationalist attitude of the majority of professors was seldom harsh or aggressive and never radically articulated – especially in the last years of the republic, [the university] was despite all its misgivings [towards Weimar] concerned with the mitigation of tensions.”<sup>35</sup>

This relative moderation did not mean, however, that the professors would go as far as to embrace the new democratic order. Like the professors of other German universities, the Munich professoriate also never declared itself openly in favor of the Weimar Republic. While the university administration usually tried to temper or to even suppress radical political tirades and direct attacks against the Weimar government at student-organized *Vaterländische Kundgebungen* (patriotic rallies),<sup>36</sup> the university at the same time conspicuously avoided celebrating the Weimar Constitution or displaying the colors of the republic.<sup>37</sup> Instead, Munich professors and students attended in droves the yearly *Reichsgründungsfeier*, the patriotic commemoration of the foundation of the Second German Reich that rekindled nationalist nostalgia for the old political order and further strengthened the reservation against the current democratic state.<sup>38</sup>

Despite of the prevalence of antipathy to Weimar among their colleagues, a small group of liberal professors took a stand for their beliefs in the late 1920s. At the *Reichsgründungsfeier* in 1927, Rector Karl Vossler ordered the Weimar colors to be used and refused to give preferential treatment to the attending Bavarian Crown Prince Rupprecht – both actions a clear affront to his Weimar-skeptic colleagues. Vossler also invited the Jewish fraternities to attend the celebration in defiance of the public demands of Nazi-influenced *Studentenschaft* (student union) to exclude them.



Not surprisingly, many students and even some professors boycotted the event. In a politically courageous and far-sighted speech, Vossler then openly criticized the students' fanatical adherence to Nazi ideology and stated that university life had to be a reflection of the whole country and not just of one political group.<sup>39</sup> Vossler's support for the unpopular Weimar order and his audacious stand against the ambient extremism were widely covered in the press, but his action remained a unique event because the majority of professors did not subsequently take up his call.

Unlike Vossler and the minority of liberal professors, the majority of conservative professors showed much more sympathy for the cause of the Nazi students. This is not to say, however, that they approved of their methods. For example, Pedagogy Professor Eduard Spranger gave voice to the widespread opinion among conservative professors that the Nazi student movement was in its outward appearance "undisciplined," but "true" in its core.<sup>40</sup>

How far the conservatives were from truly understanding Nazi radicalism, however, is clear from the reminiscences of Professor Artur Kutscher, who taught theater studies at Munich University between 1907 and 1951. In his memoirs, he recounts that he was impressed in late 1926 by the fact that an increasing number of "respectable people" at the university spoke in favor of Hitler's political program.<sup>41</sup> Kutscher admits that the social and nationalist aspects of Hitler's program intrigued him as well:

I valued Hitler's fight against the egoism of the wealthy, his appeal to a feeling and spirit of community, the individual sacrifice for the common good, his attempt to instill Marxist workers with nationalist spirit, his desire to unite Austria with Germany. Certainly, the negative sides could not be denied: the increasing uniformity of German life, the tendency to isolate the youth from their parents, the denial of God, the subjugation of the individual, the all-pervasive power of the party that reached even into the most private matters, the 'education' of the youth by leaders who were often insufficiently educated: we perceived all of this, but most of us overlooked it because of national and social goals [that Hitler promised to achieve] had more importance.<sup>42</sup>

While Kutscher cast himself in his memoir as a left-leaning liberal and philo-Semite, this picture does not necessarily reflect his real stance at the time. Fritz Franz Rosenthal, one of Kutscher's students between 1931 and 1934, described his teacher as authoritarian and a "typical German nationalist,"<sup>43</sup> who had his reservations about the Jews and used to say about them: "The Jews are always a little smarter than everyone

else.”<sup>44</sup> His nationalist attitude and arguably latent anti-Semitism would explain why Kutscher, like so many other German nationalists, found it easy enough to go along with Nazism in 1933 despite certain misgivings.

While latent anti-Semitism was a relatively common phenomenon at Munich University even before the Great War,<sup>45</sup> by the early 1920s Jewish professors faced increasing hostility of an entirely different degree from their students, assistants, and even some of their own colleagues. In 1924, the famous Jewish chemistry professor Richard Willstätter resigned from his teaching position to protest the anti-Semitism that repeatedly swayed his colleagues’ choices of new faculty members. In his memoirs, Willstätter recounts that Germany was gripped by desperation after the defeat of 1918, which gave rise to first left- and then right-wing radicalism. Instead of quieting down after the political disturbances subsided after 1923, the universities became hot beds of nationalist and anti-Semitic feeling:

The universities succumbed to a form of right-wing radicalism. Shortly after being relieved from the fear of Communism, strong or at least apparently strong individuals in the faculty and in the [Bavarian] Academy [of Sciences] succumbed to the old chauvinism once again.<sup>46</sup>

Willstätter did not suffer at first from direct anti-Semitic actions against him because he was a well-respected and revered teacher. Nazi students in his classes respectfully took off their party pins before entering the room, and the party members among his assistants told him in embarrassed tones that they rejected the Nazi party’s anti-Semitism, which seemed to them “superfluous” to the movement’s political program. Outside his classroom, however, anti-Semitism was rampant, and Willstätter remembers that the corridors of the university were plastered with red posters saying: “No German youth can be allowed to sit at the feet of a Jewish teacher.”<sup>47</sup>

To his great dismay, Willstätter now found that in addition to a radicalizing student body, there was an emerging discriminatory pattern: German universities were treating Jewish and “German” scholars unequally, in clear violation of the Weimar constitution and also of German academic tradition.<sup>48</sup> Even his own natural science department suffered increasingly from anti-Semitic tendencies. In the early 1920s, a large majority of his faculty colleagues repeatedly rejected highly qualified Jewish scholars as candidates for teaching positions at Munich University “because they did not want a scholar in their midst whom they suspected of being of Jewish heritage.”<sup>49</sup> After seeing three Jewish scholars successively rejected as candidates, Willstätter resigned in protest in 1924 and could not be persuaded to reconsider his decision.<sup>50</sup>

His successor, Heinrich Wieland, disagreed with Willstätter's assessment that the German universities were strongly influenced by anti-Semitism. Yet the noted economist Lujo Brentano agreed with Willstätter, his old friend. Brentano wrote in a letter that many of his friends in academic circles had been overjoyed to hear that "a Jew" (i.e., Willstätter) had resigned from a prestigious post at Munich University.<sup>51</sup> Willstätter's own colleagues had even admitted to him that anti-Semitism had indirectly or directly influenced their rejection of the Jewish candidates. He wrote in his memoirs:

A number of colleagues explained to me that their most recent appointments were decisively influenced by anti-Semitic considerations, because they wanted to take into account the contemporary currents and avoid disturbances. Other colleagues in the faculty majority have explained that their decision was swayed not by anti-Semitism but by opportunism.<sup>52</sup>

As Willstätter's account shows, the professors of Munich University, while not rabid anti-Semites, nonetheless did succumb early to the deepening discrimination around them, choosing to accommodate it or profit from it rather than to oppose it. Such moral weakness in the face of political and so-called racial extremism, already obvious in academia in 1924, would allow Nazism an easy time in taking over all German society in 1933 – there simply was no real resistance. Writing in 1940, Willstätter regarded the educational elite's spinelessness as the major reason for the success of Nazism in 1933:

The German people have given free rein to the most brutal, thugish, and cruel anti-Semitism, whose precondition was the consent and acquiescence of thousands of opportunists and millions of weak and cowardly people. From the beginning, the universities and academic societies showed themselves as the weakest of them all. No one opposed the end of free expression and individualism.<sup>53</sup>

Willstätter concluded that the majority of his colleagues at Munich University were simply too weak and characterless to resist Nazism. They jumped on the Nazi bandwagon not out of conviction or affinity, but out of fear or opportunism.<sup>54</sup>

The Vossler, Kutscher, and Willstätter examples show clearly that the great majority of Munich professors did little to oppose and much to accommodate the increasing Nazi radicalism that had entered their university. The rising anti-Semitism among the student fraternities led to the dismissal of all Jews from their organizations in 1926. In the same year, a group of Munich students founded the National Socialist German Student Union (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* or

NSDStB).<sup>55</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Nazi-influenced student organizations and the NSDStB then tried to keep Jews from attending official functions such as the *Reichsgründungsfeier* in 1927.<sup>56</sup>

In the following years, the NSDStB managed to dominate student politics at Munich University despite winning only a third of the seats in the executive branch of the student self-government (*Allgemeiner Studentenausschuss* or AStA).<sup>57</sup> Nazi student agitators began to disturb and disrupt lectures and university events that were, in their opinion, not in line with Nazi ideology. They also frequently uttered threats of future retaliation against professors who were either openly pro-democratic or Jewish. This led all but the most courageous professors to abstain from any form of political opposition to Nazism even prior to 1933.<sup>58</sup>

A good example of the extreme pressure pro-Weimar and Jewish professors now faced from the NSDStB was the treatment of Munich law professor Hans Nawiasky. Because of his assumed Jewish heritage and his public support of the Weimar constitution, Nazi students began in 1930 to disturb his lectures and to make threats against him. When Nawiasky compared the Versailles Treaty with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty<sup>59</sup> in one of his lectures in 1931, the NSDStB promptly started what became known as the Munich University Riots. The police had to restore order, and the rector decided to close down the university for a week.<sup>60</sup>

While the university administration did try in the early 1930s to rein in the NSDStB by threatening to dismiss its student leaders, its threats turned out to be empty. More concerned with avoiding unrest, the university administration shrank from a real confrontation. This is why the NSDStB's intimidation tactics worked as intended. After Nawiasky's disastrous clash with Nazi students, fewer and fewer democratically-minded Munich professors dared to speak up in defense of the Weimar Republic. Nawiasky's fate had given them a clear prospect of what would be in store for Weimar-supporters if the Nazis ever came to power. As though it were a self-fulfilling prophecy, their assessment proved correct. After Hitler became chancellor in January 1933, Nazi thugs raided Nawiasky's apartment, but luckily for him, he was not at home. Upon hearing about the raid, Nawiasky immediately fled to Switzerland, where he stayed until 1946.<sup>61</sup>

As the Nawiasky case clearly shows, the political environment changed completely in January 1933. Instead of a weak democratic government that the professors could reject, criticize, or ignore, they now faced a burgeoning totalitarian dictatorship that was bent on forcing its will upon the German universities and that would severely punish any act of opposition. In the eyes of many professors, it seemed best to respond to this dramatic political change with adaptation or *Selbstgleichschaltung* (self-coordination) rather than resistance.

Was adaptation the only alternative? In his memoir, the former Munich chemist Willstätter blamed the universities for having given in too easily to the Nazi usurpation of their academic freedoms: "The universities . . . started to fall silent early on."<sup>62</sup> While he reproached his colleagues for a lack of courage, it is clear that the professors' adaptive behavior was not based on a newfound (or already existent) Nazi mindset, but on their weakness and cowardice.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that German scholars felt too weak to resist did not, however, make them less guilty of abetting a criminal regime. Entrenched in a comparably safe environment of state employment and enjoying high social prestige and moral authority, German scholars would have been in a formidable position to deny the Nazis what they needed most: the seal of approval by the respectable educational elite who would lend scientific authority to many, if not all, of the Nazis' political and racial concepts. While it is understandable for human behavior to choose the path of least resistance in the face of political pressure, it is also easy to agree with Willstätter that German professors as a group – at Munich and at other universities – yielded too easily and frequently supported the regime more than necessary.

Let us return to the original question of whether the German professors in general acted as Weimar's undertakers by not supporting the new democratic order and thereby playing into the hands of Hitler. The examples posed above from Munich University – which I argue are representative as regards the faculties at other German universities – show that the majority of professors were no friends of the Weimar order. Only a small minority of academics was willing to champion the cause of democracy, and most of that group fell silent when Nazi pressure increased in the late twenties and thirties. Yet it would be misleading to interpret the professors' silence simply as approval or even as an embrace of Nazi ideology – as historians such as Anselm Faust or Bruno Reimann have done.<sup>64</sup> The Munich case demonstrates that German academia was not committed to Nazi ideology before 1933, but that the scholars kept silent because of cowardice, opportunism, or both. While this gives the German educational elite a partial responsibility for the demise of Weimar, it does not make them Hitler's eager collaborators.

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, Frederic Lilge, *The Abuse of Learning: The Failure of the German University* (New York: Macmillan, 1948). A German exile and scholar, Lilge condemned the German universities of the Weimar era for paving the way for Nazism by instilling authoritarian, nationalistic, and militaristic values in their students. For other critical views see Wolfgang Wippermann, "Die Hochschulpolitik in der Weimarer Republik," *Politische Studien* 20 (1969): 143–58; Alice Gallin, *Midwives to Nazism: University Professors in Weimar Germany, 1925–1933* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986); Bruno Reimann, "Hochschule zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur," in Renate Knigge-Tesche, ed., *Berater der Braunen Macht: Wissenschaft und Wissenschaftler im NS-Staat* (Frankfurt a. M.: Anabas-Verlag, 1999), 11–25.

2. Anselm Faust, "Professoren für die NSDAP: Zum politischen Verhalten der Hochschullehrer 1932/33," in Manfred Heinemann, ed., *Erziehung und Schulung im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), 10, 15. Faust also sees relevance in the fact that already in 1932 (e.g., a year before Hitler came to power), eighty-two professors voluntarily signed public declarations in favor of Hitler. Historian Wolfgang Kunkel made a similar argument earlier. See Wolfgang Kunkel, "Der Professor im Dritten Reich," in Helmut Kuhn, ed., *Die Deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich: Eine Vortragsreihe der Universität München* (Munich: Piper, 1966), 23.
3. Their conservative colleagues called them disdainfully "Vernunftsrepublikaner" (rationalizing republicans), a derogatory term for people who embraced the Weimar Republic only because they thought it was reasonable to do so, but not because they believed in it passionately. See Helmut Heiber, *Der Professor im Dritten Reich: Bilder aus der akademischen Provinz* (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1991), 35.
4. Ibid.; "...aus der mit zunehmender Geschwindigkeit eine national-völkische, und dann, mit noch mehr Vehemenz, eine nationalsozialistische Kampfgruppe und Speerspitze erwuchs und die entsprechenden Druck auf die Hochschule ausübte."
5. During the imperial era, Social Democrats were often perceived as enemies of the state, an image that they were unable to shed when they took over the Weimar government. See Helmut Heiber, *Die Republik von Weimar* (Munich, 1982), 17ff.
6. While the accession of Hindenburg to the German presidency soothed German conservatives and made the Weimar state more acceptable to them, it would be wrong to assume that this change made the Republic more stable or shored up much needed republican support in the middle classes. On the contrary, it soon became clear that Hindenburg himself had little love for the Weimar Republic. While he did not actively try to destroy it, he made no secret of the fact that he would prefer a military-backed, authoritarian regime that would cement the domination of the conservative ruling elite over the German state. His attempt to engineer such a transformation in the early 1930s, however, led to the appointment of Hitler as Reich chancellor and the downfall not only of the Weimar democracy, but the conservative elite as well. See Heiber, *Die Republik von Weimar*, 253–79.
7. Helmut Böhm, *Von der Selbstverwaltung zum Führerprinzip. Die Universität München in den ersten Jahren des Dritten Reiches, 1933–1936* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1995), 43; "liberal-konservativ bis deutschnational."
8. Heiber, *Der Professor im Dritten Reich*, 36. The formulation preceding the quotation is a very close paraphrase. "Auch der deutsche Professor dieser, der politisch mausgrauen Kategorie, liebte den Staat nicht, dem er diente.... Sie hasste sie [die Republik] zwar nicht..., aber sie beobachtete das politische Geschehen mit kühler Skepsis."
9. Ibid., 34. Heiber (p. 37) quotes the phrase "neutrale Loyalität" from Hellmut Seier, "Marburg in der Weimarer Republik, 1918–1933," in Erhart Dettmering and Rudolf Grenz, ed., *Marburger Geschichte: Rückblick auf die Stadtgeschichte* (Marburg, 1980), 587.
10. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 42.
11. Heiber, *Der Professor im Dritten Reich*, 37. "Man darf also für eine beachtliche Majorität der 'Partei der Parteilosen', der angeblich 'unpolitischen', ein recht ähnliches politischen Grundverständnis annehmen wie bei der sich lautstark deutschnational artikulierenden Fraktion, nur mit größerer Zurückhaltung, in kühler Passivität, bei einer Standortbestimmung vielleicht einen halben Schritt weiter zur Mitte anzusetzen."
12. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 42. "Die Mehrheit der Hochschullehrer konnte und wollte kein positives Verhältnis zum Weimarer Staat gewinnen, weil eben die rückwärtsgewandte Betrachtung dominierte,

die 'nostalgische Erinnerung' an das Kaiserreich und der Wunsch nach nationalem Wiederaufstieg, nach Wiederherstellung der alten Größe."

13. Rüdiger vom Bruch and Rainer A. Müller, ed., *Erlebte und gelebte Universität: Die Universität München im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Pfaffenhofen: W. Ludwig Verlag, 1986), 17.

14. Munich University Archive (UAM), E-II-2517, K.A. v. Müller, *Fragebogen supplement*, n.d. [1945].

15. Wolfgang Sauer, "National Socialism: Totalitarianism or Fascism?," *The American Historical Review* 73, no. 2 (1967): 420.

16. Reginald H. Phelps, "Hitler and the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei," in: *The American Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1963): 976.

17. Kurt Eisner had been on his way to parliament to resign after his Independent Socialist Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) had lost the state elections in February 1919. However, many Munich conservatives perceived him still as a threat, because before becoming the elected head of government in Bavaria, Eisner had been the organizer of the socialist revolution in Bavaria that had overthrown the Wittelsbacher monarchy back in November 1918. See Heiber, *Die Republik von Weimar*, 45ff.

18. Bruch and Müller, ed., *Erlebte und gelebte Universität*, 205–206. "An der Universität herrschte Panik. Ein paar verwegene junge Kerle, Studenten und Studentinnen, forderten den Dekanen die Schlüssel ihrer Archive ab. Sie bedrohten die Universität, der man vorwarf, die Fühlung mit den Strömungen der Zeit und der Forderungen der Straße verloren zu haben. Auch wurden einige meiner Kollegen persönlich bedroht. Übrigens hatten eine Anzahl der Professoren, die politisch weiter rechts standen, in aller Eile die Stadt für einige Wochen zu verlassen."

19. Ibid., 18: "die Universität zu revolutionieren"; "Volksuniversität"; "proletarische Übergangshochschule."

20. During the Third Reich, Franz Ritter von Epp (1868–1946) served as the Nazis' *Reichsstatthalter* of Bavaria between 1933 and 1945.

21. Two historians note "das Schreckbild des 'jüdischen Bolschewisten'"; see Burkhard Asmuss and Arnulf Scriba, "Die Münchner Räterepublik," *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/weimar/revolution/raeterepublik/index.html> (accessed 29 June 2007).

22. Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 121–22.

23. A list of speakers cited in Ernst Deuerlein's article shows that Geheimrat Professor Erich Marcks was another Munich professor who taught an "*Aufklärungskurs*" or political instruction course for Mayr's unit. See Ernst Deuerlein, "Hitlers Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 2, no. 7 (1959): 179.

24. Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris*, 123.

25. Ibid.

26. Deuerlein, "Hitlers Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr," 186. "Vom bloßen Kursteilnehmer war er [Hitler] zum Angehörigen des Aufklärungskommandos und dann zum politischen Mitarbeiter Mayrs 'avanciert.'"

27. Ibid., 188–89.

28. In a similar way, Ian Kershaw regards Captain Mayr as "one of the 'midwives' of Hitler's political 'career.'" Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889–1936: Hubris*, 122. Deuerlein argues that Captain Mayr's approval of Hitler's anti-Semitic ideas was an important confirmation for their correctness. See Deuerlein, "Hitlers Eintritt in die Politik und die Reichswehr," 185.

29. Another Nazi leader who studied at Munich University was Rudolf Hess, who attended lectures by the political geographer Karl Haushofer. "His geographical-determinist teachings provided an answer to Hess's search for a theoretical way out of Germany's shame, but Hess was also personally on good terms with his teacher." Dietrich Orlow, "Rudolf Hess: Deputy Führer," in Ronald and Rainer Zitelmann Smelser, ed., *The Nazi Elite* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 74.

30. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 48. Böhm mentions as Nazi sympathizers the historian Max Buchner, Fritz Lenz, Friedrich Wilhelm v. Bissing, Wilhelm Pinder, and Alfred Lorenz. Lorenz had even become a member of the party. See also Christoph Weisz, *Geschichtsauffassung und politisches Denken Münchener Historiker der Weimarer Zeit* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), 259.

31. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 48.

32. For example the political geographer Karl Haushofer, the historian Karl Alexander von Müller, and the forestry professor Karl Leopold Escherich. Haushofer was well acquainted with his student Rudolf Hess and knew Hitler quite well. Despite sympathizing with the Nazi cause, he never joined the Nazi Party. See Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Karl Haushofer: Leben und Werk*, 2 vols. (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1979). Von Müller was an early Nazi sympathizer, but joined the Party only in 1933. Escherich was a member of the early Nazi Party until it was outlawed in 1923, but he never rejoined the refounded party after 1925. See Werner Schelling, "Karl Alexander von Müller (1882–1964): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft und des politischen Denkens in Deutschland" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Wien, 1975), 153.

33. As well as one honorary and one retired professor. See Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 48.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.; "die nationale Einstellung der Mehrheit der Professoren sich selten scharf oder aggressiv und nie radikal artikuliert und man v. a. in den letzten Jahren der Republik bei allen Gegensätzen auf Mäßigung bedacht war."

36. Ibid., 46.

37. Ibid., 45. See also Bruch and Müller, ed., *Erlebte und gelebte Universität*, 18.

38. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 45f.

39. Karl Vossler, *Politik und Geistesleben. Rede zur Reichsgründungsfeier im Januar 1927 und drei weitere Ansprachen* (Munich, 1927), 3–11. For example, Vossler criticized (4–5): "Immer in neuen Verpuppungen die alte Unvernunft: ein metaphysisches, spekulatives, romantisches, fanatisches, abstraktes, irrationalistisches und mystisches Politisieren...."

40. Hans Peter Bleuel, *Deutschlands Bekenner: Professoren zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur* (Bern: Scherz, 1968), 205: "im Kern echt, nur in der Form undiszipliniert."

41. Artur Kutscher, *Der Theaterprofessor. Ein Leben für die Wissenschaft vom Theater* (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1960), 206.

42. Ibid., 207. "Wertvoll an Hitlers Streben erschien mir in den zwanziger Jahren sein Kampf gegen die Selbstsucht wohlhabender Kreise, sein Appell an das Gemeinschaftsgefühl und –denken, an die Opferbereitschaft für das Ganze, sein Bemühen, den Arbeiter marxistischen Bekenntnisses mit nationalem Geiste zu erfüllen, der Gedanke der deutschen Einheit unter Einbeziehung Österreichs. Freilich, zu übersehen waren nicht die negativen Seiten der Uniformierung des deutschen Lebens. Die Tendenzen der Loslösung der Jugend vom Elternhaus, die Leugnung Gottes, die Unterdrückung des Individuums, die Übermacht der



Partei, die sich selbst in den privatesten Bezirken äußerte, die 'Erziehung' der Jugendlichen durch Führer, die bildungsmäßig oft unter ihnen standen: all dies wurde zwar gesehen, aber doch angesichts der scheinbar stärkeren nationalen und sozialen Ziele von den meisten Beobachtern zurückgestellt."

43. Bruch and Müller, ed., *Erlebte und gelebte Universität*, 337; "typischer Deutschnationaler."

44. Ibid., 338. "Die Juden... haben immer eine Gehirnwindlung mehr als alle anderen Menschen."

45. See Notker Hammerstein, *Antisemitismus und deutsche Universitäten, 1871–1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1995), 72ff.

46. Richard Willstätter, *Aus meinem Leben* (Weinheim: Verlag Chemie, 1949), 208. "Die Universitäten waren einer Art von Rechtsradikalismus verfallen. Starke oder stark scheinende Persönlichkeiten im Lehrkörper und in der Akademie, kaum befreit von ihrer Angst vor kommunistischen Umwälzungen, erlagen wieder ihrer alten Sünde des Chauvinismus."

47. Ibid., 341. "Kein deutscher Jüngling darf künftig zu Füßen eines jüdischen Lehrers sitzen."

48. Ibid., 399.

49. Ibid., 343; "weil sie nicht einen Gelehrten von vermutetermaßen jüdischer...Abstammung in ihrer Mitte haben wollten."

50. Ibid., 346–51. Willstätter stayed on the faculty until his chosen successor, Professor Heinrich Wieland of Freiburg, was safely in place in September 1925. He continued to participate in all faculty meetings for several more years, but stopped being invited in the early 1930s. After 1933, Willstätter's name was silently removed from the university directory and many of his friends at the university stopped having contact with him. Willstätter remained in Munich until 1939 and only barely escaped to Switzerland before it became impossible for Jews to leave Germany. He left Germany with the greatest reluctance and died in exile in 1942.

51. Ibid., 348.

52. Ibid., 344. "Eine Anzahl Kollegen hat mir erklärt, dass die letzten Berufungsvorschläge von antisemitischen Erwägungen entscheidend beeinflusst worden waren, und zwar in dem Sinne, den Zeitströmungen Rechnung zu tragen und Unruhe zu vermeiden. Andere Kollegen von der Fakultätsmehrheit haben mir erklärt, nicht so sehr antisemitische Rücksichten als überhaupt Opportunitäts Erwägungen seien für ihr Vorgehen bei der Berufung entscheidend gewesen."

53. Ibid., 397. "Das deutsche Volk hat dem rohesten, räuberischen und grausamen Antisemitismus freies Spiel gelassen, dessen Voraussetzung die Zustimmung und die Duldung von Tausenden Vorteilssuchender und von Millionen Schwacher und Feiger gewesen ist. In der Schwäche standen von Anbeginn die Universitäten und gelehrten Gesellschaften voran. Bedenken gegen die Unterdrückung der freien Meinungsäußerung und des Individualismus wurden nicht laut."

54. Ibid., 313ff.

55. Bruch and Müller, ed., *Erlebte und gelebte Universität*, 18f.

56. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 45ff.

57. Ibid., 56.

58. Heiber, *Der Professor im Dritten Reich*, 37.

59. Before their ultimate defeat the Germans had forced the Russians to sign the very unfavorable Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, but the Nazis and other German nationalists refused to see any similarities between this treaty and the Versailles Treaty of 1919.

60. Böhm, *Selbstverwaltung*, 55. The NSDStB orchestrated the riots to put pressure on Nawiasky. While they did not succeed in driving him from the university, the event demonstrated how strongly the political atmosphere at Munich University had already shifted toward the Nazis' *völkisch*-nationalism years before the seizure of power in 1933. For more information see Michael Behrendt, "Hans Nawiasky und die Münchner Studentenkrawalle von 1931," in Elisabeth Kraus, ed., *Die Universität München im Dritten Reich: Aufsätze* (Munich, 2006), 15–42.

61. Upon his return to Munich in 1946, Nawiasky became one of the fathers of the new Bavarian Constitution. For more information see Hans Zacher, "Hans Nawiasky, " in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, ed. Hans Günter Hockerts (Berlin, 1999), 19:4–6.

62. Willstätter, *Aus meinem Leben*, 313.

63. Heiber, *Der Professor im Dritten Reich*, 47.

64. See Faust, "Professoren für die NSDAP," 10ff., and Reimann, "Hochschule zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur," 11–25.

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## Minutes of the Seventy-eighth Annual Meeting

6 March 2010

### SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY CENTER, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

**BREAKFAST/REGISTRATION: 7:30–8:45 a.m.**

**OFFICERS' MEETING: 8:30–8:45 a.m.**

**SESSION A: 8:50–10:10 a.m.**

**Panel 1: Slavery and Slaveholders in the Colonial Era**

Chair/comment: Paul Thompson, North Greenville University

*Paper 1:* "Hearing Africa: Early Modern Europeans' Auditory Perceptions of the African Other," Amy Long Caffee, University of South Carolina

*Paper 2:* "'Enlightened' Slavery: The Evolution of South Carolina Slaveholders, 1669–1820," Meggan A. Farish, Waccamaw Center for Cultural and Historical Studies, Coastal Carolina University

*Paper 3:* "'The Way Slaves Married in Slavery Time:' South Carolina, Broomstick Weddings and the Ubiquity of Slave Culture throughout the Antebellum South," Tyler D. Parry, University of South Carolina

**Panel 2: Reflections on South Carolina in the Antebellum Period**

Chair/comment: Lewie Reece, Anderson University

*Paper 1:* "'Ever Able, Manly, Just, and Heroic:' Preston Brooks and the Myth of Southern Manhood," Kenneth A. Deitreich, West Virginia University

*Paper 2:* "Plain Folk of Color: Free People of Color and Common Whites in the Rural Charleston District, 1800–1860," David Dangerfield, University of South Carolina

*Paper 3:* "'We Will Strike at the Head and Demolish the Monster': The Impact of Joel R. Poinsett's correspondence on President Andrew Jackson during the Nullification Crisis, 1832–1833," Joshua Cain, Georgia Southern University

**Panel 3: Life and Work in Twentieth Century South Carolina**

Chair/Comment: Andrew Myers, USC Upstate

*Paper 1:* "Covered with Rust: the 1922 Columbia Streetcar Strike,"

Jeffrey M. Leatherwood, West Virginia University

*Paper 2:* "Just Plain Hard Work: Women and Farm Labor in the Rural South,"

Matthew C. Roberts, Converse College

*Paper 3:* "History and Genealogy: Giving Voice to the Voiceless: Case Studies in History and Genealogy," Harris M. Bailey, Jr., Old Edgefield District African American Genealogical Society

**SESSION B: 10:30–11:50 a.m.****Panel 4: National and International Politics in the Twentieth Century**

Chair: Edward Lee, Winthrop University

Comment: Jeffery Cook, North Greenville University

*Paper 1:* "Undertakers of the Weimar Republic? The Nazification of Munich Professors, 1918–1933," Stefan Wiecki, Presbyterian College

*Paper 2:* "Stanley Morse and the 1952 Eisenhower Campaign," Jeremy Monroe Richards, Gordon College

**Panel 5: 1960s Sport in the International Setting**

Chair/Comment: Fritz Hamer, S.C. State Museum

*Paper 1:* "High Costs and Hidden Wrenches: Contests for Physical Space in British Football in the 1960s and 1970s," Brett Bebbler, Presbyterian College

*Paper 2:* "Hard Foul: The U.S./Soviet Basketball Rivalry, 1965–1975," Kevin Witherspoon, Lander University

**Panel 6: A Century of Black Educational Experiences in South Carolina**

Chair: Rebekah Dobrasko, S.C. Department of Archives & History

Comment: Janet Hudson, University of South Carolina

*Paper 1:* "The Jenkins Orphanage: Saving African-American Orphans, Making Model Citizens," Nathan Johnson, Park Guide, Fort Sumter National Monument

*Paper 2:* "A Study of Educational Inequalities in South Carolina: Creating A Movement Against Segregation," Celia James, University of South Carolina

*Paper 3:* "Integrating Rock Hill," Luci Vaden, Rawlinson Road Middle School

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**Panel 7: Military History in Late-Eighteenth Century U.S. History**

Chair/Comment: Marvin Cann, Professor Emeritus, Lander University

*Paper 1:* "Atrocity Stories as a Teaching Tool for the Rules of War in South Carolina's Revolution," Rebecca Brannon, USC Aiken

*Paper 2:* "Taming the Fox: Francis Marion and His Commanders, 1780–1782," Tom Powers, USC Sumter

*Paper 3:* "'Were You Entitled To An Answer': General Anthony Wayne and Major William Campbell on the Banks of the Maumee," Sarah Miller, USC Salkehatchie

**LUNCH: 12:00–12:45 p.m.**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: 12:45–1:30 p.m.**

Dr. William Ramsey, "You Say Yemassee, I Say Yamasee: Recasting the Early History of South Carolina"

**MEMBERS' MEETING: 1:30–2:00 p.m.**

President Andrew Myers called the business meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. after a thoughtful keynote address by William Ramsey about his recent book *The Yamasee War*.

The minutes of the 9 March 2009 annual meeting at the Campus Life Center of the University of South Carolina Upstate were approved as submitted and printed.

Treasurer Rodger Stroup presented the Treasurer's report indicating that current income/expenses for the year is positive with a balance of \$1451.87. It was noted that this is the last year that Rodger will serve as Treasurer. A resolution of thanks for all his work for the association was passed unanimously by the membership.

Members of the executive committee and from the floor nominated the following individuals for service:

- President – Kevin Witherspoon, Lander University
- Vice-President – Paul Thompson, North Greenville University
- Secretary – Michael Kohl, Clemson University
- Treasurer – Eric Emerson, South Carolina Department of Archives & History
- At Large Member of the Executive Committee – Sarah Miller, University of South Carolina Salkehatchie (term expires 2013)

The nominees were elected without opposition and by acclamation.

President Myers turned the gavel over to President-elect Kevin Witherspoon, who thanked the South Carolina Department of Archives & History for hosting the meeting; after brief consultation, he also announced that the College of Charleston will host the next annual meeting of the Association on 5 March 2011.

The business meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

**SESSION C: 2:00–3:20 p.m.**

**Panel 8:** *Reflections on Religion, Race, and Gender Issues in the Atlantic World*

Chair/Comment: Brenda Schoolfield, Bob Jones University

*Paper 1:* “Refugees, Race Issues, and Rituals: A Catholic Community in Charleston South Carolina, 1790–1820,” Christina Shedlock, College of Charleston

*Paper 2:* “‘Differences in opinion or practice in matters of Religious concernment’: The Dynamics of Promoting Liberty of Conscience in Proprietary Carolina, 1630–1687,” Neal Polhemus, College of Charleston

*Paper 3:* “‘Firm and Immovable as Rocks’: The Empowerment of Native American Women within the Jesuit Missions of New France,” Ivy Farr, College of Charleston

*Paper 4:* “Satan, Africans, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: An Examination of Formation of the Image of the Devil,” Hilary Lentz, College of Charleston/The Citadel

**Panel 9:** *Society and Education in Twentieth Century South Carolina*

Chair/Comment: Katherine D. Cann, Spartanburg Methodist College

*Paper 1:* “A Centennial Celebration: Anderson University Turns 100,” Joyce Wood, Anderson University

*Paper 2:* “The State versus the Volunteer: Power and Promotion in the Formation of the South Carolina Illiteracy Commission 1917–1918,” Mary Mac Ogden, University of South Carolina

**Panel 10:**

Moderator/Comment: Ron Cox, USC Lancaster

Special screening of the documentary film: “Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968” (2009), directed by Bestor Cram and Judy Richardson

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***The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association:***  
**Index of Articles 2006–2010**

Robert C. Figueira

Basinger, David. "Painting What Cannot Be Painted: Pieter Brueghel's Silent Opinion." (2010):23–30

Burton, Orville Vernon. "The Age of Lincoln: Then and Now." (2010):7–22

Crawford, Lindsay. "Martha Rutledge Kinloch Singleton: A Slaveholding Widow in Late Antebellum South Carolina." (2009):15–26

Evans, Mark Thomas. "The Friendship Nine and National Organizations: A Case Study in Mutual Aid." (2007):7–13

Fairchild, Mary Jo. "The African American Museum Movement: New Strategies in the Battle for Equality in the Twentieth Century." (2008):5–14

Figueira, Robert C. "*The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association: Index of Articles 1996–2005.*" (2006):41–46

Grady, Timothy P. "To 'Vomit his Fury and Malice': English Fears and Spanish Influences on the Exploration and Establishment of Carolina through 1670." (2010):31–42

Graichen, Jody H. "Reinterpreting South Carolina History: The South Carolina Negro Writers' Project, 1936–1937." (2007):15–25

Grose, Philip G. "Robert McNair and Lyndon Johnson: The Heritage of the New Deal." (2009):7–14

Hamer, Fritz. "Origins and Development of College Football in South Carolina, 1889–1930." (2010):43–56

Hamer, Fritz. "Wade Hampton: Conflicted Leader of the Conservative Democracy?" (2007):27–40

Honeck, Mischa. "Free-Soilers and Forty-Eighters: The Anglo- and German-American Campaign for a Free Western Texas, 1854–56." (2007):41–51

Hux, Roger K. "Beaufort and Louvain: Public Reaction to Library Destruction during the American Civil War and the World Wars." (2010):57–65

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- Joyner, Charles. "Shared Traditions: South Carolina as a Folk Culture." (2006):1–10
- Keeney, Areli A. "Free Speech in South Carolina: The 1965 Speaker Ban Controversy." (2009):27–40
- Leatherwood, Jeffrey M. "'Grant Us a Contract': Spartanburg as Prelude to the Carolina Regional Transit Strike (1919)." (2009):41–57
- Lesser, Charles H. "A Beleaguered but Proud Man: Alexander Salley and the Beginnings of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History." (2007):1–6
- Loar, Carol A. "'A Little Learning is a Dangerous Thing': Attitudes Toward Popular Literacy in Sixteenth-Century England." (2010):67–78
- Jones-Branch, Cherisse. "'May We Pray that We be Given Strength and Faith to Stand Together': Conflict, Change, and the Charleston, South Carolina YWCA, 1940s–1960s." (2008):15–28
- Lumans, Valdis O. "A Small State in a Big War: Writing the History of Latvia in World War II, the Principal Issues." (2007):53–70
- McNamara, Vanessa. "The Evolution of Nineteenth-Century Women's Benevolence Work in South Carolina, Charleston: A Case Study." (2009):59–66
- Matzko, Paul. "Evangelist Billy Sunday and the Evolution Controversy." (2008):29–43
- McCormick, Rob. "'Crusader Sentimentality': British Intellectuals and the Clash Over National Self-Determination in Central and Eastern Europe, 1914–1918." (2007):71–82
- Miller, Sarah E. "Indian Leadership and Consensus Opinion in the Old Northwest Territory 1783–1795." (2009):67–77
- Mullen, Lincoln. "Confessionalization and the Creedal Tradition." (2010):79–90
- Newell, Jonathan. "Billy Sunday's 1923 Evangelistic Campaign in Columbia, South Carolina." (2008):45–54
- Phillips, Julie Anna. "Changing Times: Occupational Change and Temporal Perception among Old Order Amish." (2009):79–90
- Pickett, Otis Westbrook. "'We Are Marching to Zion': Zion Church and the Distinctive Work of Presbyterian Slave Missionaries in Charleston, South Carolina, 1849–1874." (2010):91–104
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Powers, Bernard E., Jr. "What we thought we knew about nineteenth-century Black Carolinians and what we know now." (2006):11–24

Russell, Ann. "Travelling Women: Three Mid-Nineteenth-Century South Carolina Female Travelers Abroad." (2007):83–95

Synnott, Marcia G. "'Toppling' – or Revising? – Statues and Monuments: The South Carolina State House and Grounds as a Case Study." (2007):97–105

Townsend, Elaine. "George Croft Williams and Early Social Work in South Carolina." (2009):91–100

Walker, Melissa. "From Cotton Fields to Classrooms: South Carolina Women Tell the Story of a Changing Countryside." (2006):25–37

Waller, Robert. "Educational Opportunities for African Americans in the South Carolina Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942." (2010):105–16

Whalen, Philip. "Religious Responsibility and Political Culpability in the Parliament of 1628." (2008):55–74

*Please note:*

Because discrepancies occasionally occur in tables of contents of several issues, all information in the index above is rendered as it appears on the articles' title pages, with one exception. (Misplaced quotation marks in the title of the Waller entry have been removed.)



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## Constitution

- I. The name of the organization shall be the South Carolina Historical Association.
- II. The objects of this Association shall be to promote historical studies in the state of South Carolina, to bring about a closer relationship among persons living this state who are interested in history, and to encourage the preservation of historical records.
- III. Membership shall be open to anyone interested in the objectives of the Association. Annual dues shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

After having been a member of the Association for ten years and upon reaching the age of sixty-five, any member may be designated an emeritus member by the secretary. Emeritus members have all the rights and privileges of membership without being required to pay the annual dues.

Student members shall pay annual dues at half-rates.

IV. The officers shall be president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer; these shall be elected at each annual meeting. The Executive Committee shall normally nominate one person for each office. The vice-president shall be the automatic nominee for president. Nomination from the floor may be made for any office. Officers shall have the duties and perform the functions customarily attached to their respective offices with such others as may from time to time be prescribed.

V. The Executive Committee shall be composed of officers, the editor of *The Proceedings*, and three other members elected for a term of three years. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to fix the date and place of the annual meeting, to attend to the publication of *The Proceedings*, to prepare a program for the annual meeting, to prepare a list of nominations for the officers of the Association as provided in Article IV, to supervise the expenditures of the Association's funds, and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to them by the Association.

There shall be such other committees as the president may appoint, or be instructed to appoint, by resolutions of the Association.

VI. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association at the time and place appointed by the Executive Committee.

VII. A. The Association shall publish annually its proceedings to be known as *The Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association*. It shall contain the minutes of the annual meeting together with such papers and documents selected by the Executive Committee. Each fifth year, *The Proceedings* shall include a copy of the constitution of the Association. At least every five years, *The Proceedings* shall include a current list of the membership.

B. All papers read at the annual meeting shall become the property of the Association except as otherwise may be approved by the Executive Committee.

C. The Executive Committee shall annually elect an editor of *The Proceedings* who shall have authority to appoint an associate editor and shall be a member of the Executive Committee.

VIII. In the event of the dissolution, the remaining assets of the Association, if any, shall be donated by the Executive Committee to another organization which shares the objects and aims of the Association.

IX. The Publications Endowment Fund exists to supplement the income available for the publication of *The Proceedings*. Contributions may be made by anyone, and they will be acknowledged in writing.

The Fund will be administered by three trustees: the president, the treasurer, and the editor of *The Proceedings*. The trustees shall invest the Fund so as to

obtain a secure and steady income and report annually to the membership the status of the Fund.

The trustees may designate annually a sum no greater than 80 percent of the earnings of the Fund to defray the cost of printing *The Proceedings* and add the surplus of earnings each year to the principal

Should the Executive Committee determine that the Fund is not longer necessary for the purpose for which it was established, they shall recommend that this Article be removed from the constitution. If the Fund is liquidated, the Executive Committee shall make an unrestricted gift of the principal to the endowment fund of the University of South Carolina or similar historical repository in South Carolina and transfer the balance of the earning to the treasury of the Association.

X. The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at the annual meeting.

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**South Carolina Historical Association**  
**Roster of Members (for one or more years)**  
**2006–10**

Akers, Randy L.	Clements, Kendrick A.
Aldrich, Jane M.	Cook, Jeff
Allen, Jeff	Copp, Robin
Allison, Christopher W.	Cornish, Rory T.
Andrew, Jr., Rod	Cox, Ron
Bailey, Jr., Harris M.	Crawford, Lindsay
Barnes, Aneilya	Cross, James E.
Basinger, J. David	Dangerfield, David W.
Bass, Jack	Dembiczak, Angela
Baxley, Charles B.	Dobrasko, Rebekah M.
Bayard, Ross H.	Downey, Tom
Bebber, Brett	Doyle, L. Andrew
Becker, Peter W.	Drexelius, Karen M.
Bingham, Jen	Duncan, Andrew
Bodrero, Lance	Ellen, John C.
Boggs, Robert S.	Emerson, W. Eric
Booker, Jackie R.	Evans, Mark T.
Boulware, Hunt	Evans, N. David
Boulware, Tyler	Fairchild, Mary Jo
Brannon, Rebecca	Farmer, Jim
Britton, Jane P.	Farr, Ivy E.
Bryan, Michael P.	Farrish, Meggan A.
Burton, Vernon	Figueira, Robert C.
Cain, Joshua	Foster, Kayla M.
Cann, Katherine D.	Fritz, Timothy
Cann, Marvin L.	Funk, Kellen
Carter, L. H.	Garland, Abby
Chandler, Jr., Marion C.	Giauque, Carrie
Charles, Allan D.	Graichen, Jody H.
Clark, Nancy H.	Grady, Timothy
Cleland, Joel	Grose, Andrew T.

Hamblen, Lauren	Krause, Kevin M.
Hamer, Fritz P.	Kuntz, Anna
Harrelson, Alan J.	Kuykendall, John E.
Harris, Carmen V.	Lambert, Robert S.
Hart, Robert	Lander, Jr., Ernest M.
Hartsook, Herbert J.	Lare, Marvin I.
Hayner, Linda K.	Larson, Rachel C.
Hayward, Barton M.	Lathan, Libby
Hazelrigg, Dorothy M.	Leatherwood, Jeffrey M.
Heisser, David C.	Lentz, Hilary
Helsley, Alexia	Lesser, Charles H.
Helsley, Terry L.	Loar, Carol
Hickson, Shirley	Locicero, Geoffrey
Hine, William C.	Lockhart, Matthew A.
Hoffius, Susan	Lofton, Jr., Paul S.
Holliday, Claudette	Lowe, Stephen
Hollis, Daniel W.	Lumans, Valdis O.
Honeck, Mischa	Magruder, Nathaniel F.
Horne, Jr., Paul A.	Mathues, Glenn D.
Hudson, Janet G.	Matzko, John A.
Huff, Jr., A. V.	Matzko, Paul
Hutson, Henry C.	Mayer, Mark
Hux, Roger	McCandless, Amy T.
Jackson, Ramon	McCandless, Peter
James, Celia	McCormick, Michael R.
Jenkins, Katherine	McCormick, Rob
Jensen, Faye L.	McNamara, Vanessa
Johnson, James L.	Mielnik, Tara M.
Johnson, Jean C.	Miller, Sarah E.
Johnson, Lloyd	Mitchell, Sandra C.
Johnson, Nathan	Mizell, M. Hayes
Jones-Branch, Cherisse	Moore, John H.
Keeney, Areli and Craig	Moore, Joseph S.
Kingbird, R. Brian	Moore, Peter
Kline, Jeff	Moore, Robert J.
Knight, Melanie	Moreau, Jennifer
Kohl, Michael F.	Mullen, Lincoln A.

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Myers, Andrew	Seiler, Lars
Newell, Jonathan	Seiler, Tracy
Nichols, Elaine	Sepko, Cathy
O'Bryan, Shannon	Shedlock, Christina
O'Donnell, Kate	Silva, Kathryn
Ogden, Mary Mac	Smith, Selden K.
O'Neill, Stephen	Smith, Sharon
Owens, Jr., Rameth R.	Smith, W. Calvin
Palmer, Aaron	Stepp, Mary Ann
Parry, Tyler	Stevenson, Dennis M.
Philips, Julie	Stokes, Jr., Allen H.
Pickett, Otis W.	Stone, DeWitt B.
Pickett, III, Otis M.	Stone, II, R. Philip
Polhemus, Neal D.	Stroup, Rodger E.
Power, J. Tracy	Stukes, Courtney
Powers, Bernard	Stukes, Joseph T.
Powers, Thomas L.	Synnott, Marcia G.
Pratt, Dorothy	Thompson, Alexis
Price, Barry A.	Thompson, Jr., H. Paul
Prince, Jr., Eldred	Thompson, Santi
Racine, Philip N.	Thrasher, Rosemary N.
Raiford, Norman G.	Tollison, Courtney L.
Reece, Lewie	Townsend, Elaine
Revels, Tracy	Townsend, Kenneth W.
Richards, Jeremy	Vaden, Luci
Roberts, Matthew	Viault, Birdsall S.
Roberson, W. Allen	Wagner, Barbara J.
Rohr, Elaine S.	Waites, Wylma
Rohr, Karl	Walker, Aaron M.
Roper, Donald L.	Walker, Melissa A.
Roper, Donna K.	Waller, Robert A.
Russell, Ann R.	Ward, Jason M.
Scheetz, Jennifer	Weir, Robert M.
Schoolfield, Brenda T.	Wells, Cheryl A.
Scott, Jesse L.	Welsch, Susan A.
Schulz, Constance B.	West, Elizabeth
Scott, Jesse L.	Weyeneth, Robert R.

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Whalen, Philip  
Whitaker, Elizabeth  
White, John  
Wiecki, Stefan  
Williams, Mark K.  
Williamson, G. G.  
Willis, Jeffrey R.  
Witherspoon, Kevin B.  
Withrow, Scott  
Wood, Joyce  
Woodworth, David L.  
Young, Christopher  
Zoebelein, Jennifer M.





